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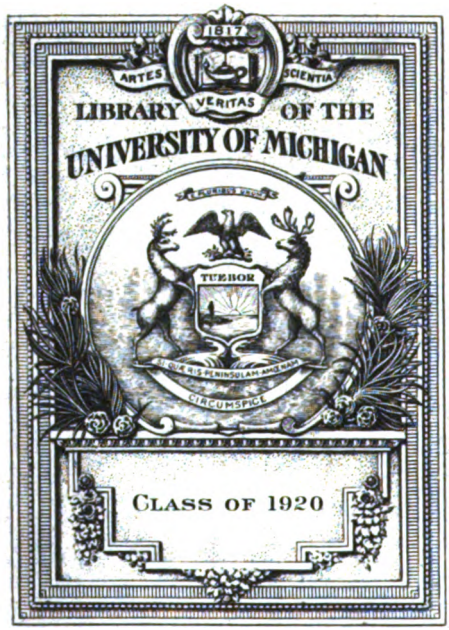

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THE WAR MEMOIRS OF
WILLIAM GRAVES SHARP

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THE WAR MEMOIRS OF WILLIAM GRAVES SHARP

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE 1914–1919

Edited with a Biographical Introduction and Notes by

WARRINGTON DAWSON

and with a Preface by

MARSHAL JOFFRE

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TO

HALLIE CLOUGH SHARP

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Class of 1920
Mr. Sharp
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PREFACE

BY MARSHAL JOFFRE

I HAVE the honour and the very great pleasure to count Mr. Sharp as my friend in the double capacity of private citizen and Ambassador of the Republic of the United States. It is through him that I received the evidences, so numerous and so varied, of affectionate and sympathetic admiration with which the American people honoured our Army in my person.

And to receive them from his hand rendered them still more precious to me.

Therefore I may be accused of partiality. But I defy anyone to find a Frenchman of France proof against this accusation. For in France, Mr. Sharp has nothing but friends.

A keen observer, penetrating and well-informed, thoroughly acquainted with our customs, our needs, and even our faults, he has understood us because he loved us. And, having understood us, he has made us known to his fellow-citizens, he has shown them how just was the cause toward which they were being irresistibly drawn by instinct. He joined with those whose call made the American legions spring up from the soil and sent them to fight and to conquer at our side.

This book will be read with passionate ardour by all the readers of the civilized world. It is the "why" and the "how" of American intervention in the European war which he sets forth, the scope extending from the *Sussex* incident to the days of the Armistice.

Many pages are devoted entirely to France, to her statesmen, to her customs, to her sufferings. "Paris under Fire" is the title of one chapter. The title of another is "French Gratitude." Of them all, this is certainly the truest. Never will France forget what America has done in helping her to conquer the barbarians and to staunch her wounds. Her gratitude for the work will not cause her to forget the workmen. Mr. Sharp is one of these, and among the very first.

Paris, 1929. J. JOFFRE.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

BY WARRINGTON DAWSON

THE letters addressed by President Wilson to William Graves Sharp during the World War leave no doubt as to Mr. Wilson's opinion of the Ambassador he had sent to represent the United States in France.

In the first letter, dated November 10, 1914—it was the one by which he introduced me to Mr. Sharp—the President referred to the "admirable" conduct of the Ambassador and expressed the "greatest confidence" in him. On July 6, 1916, he referred to "the duties which you are performing so faithfully and so well." On December 10, 1917, he mentioned the Ambassador's "power to assess public impressions." And in a letter dated September 10, 1918, Woodrow Wilson dwelt upon Mr. Sharp's "steadiness of judgment and the real American point of view you are constantly applying to our dealings with France."

Mr. Sharp's Memoirs consequently reflect the opinions, and relate particulars concerning the actions, of a War Ambassador whose ardent advocacy of the Allied Cause had the constant approval of his great Chief.

Immediately after the signing of the Armistice, Mr. Sharp began work on his Memoirs, which he continued after retiring from his post, in April 1919, but which he left unfinished at his death in November 1922.

A large proportion of the writing had been done in Paris, near the scene of the events discussed and in the grip of the strong impressions they created. I had given some assistance to Mr. Sharp in gathering the data he needed, for I had served him as Confidential Adviser and Chief of the Press Bureau of the American Embassy in Paris. It was therefore to me that

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his family entrusted the task of preparing the book for posthumous publication.

My main care has been to present an authentic text which is in some respects unique. I have accordingly limited my duties as editor to the strict execution of the annotations made by Mr. Sharp for his own guidance, as well as to certain re-arrangements and abridgments inevitable in so bulky a manuscript.

This is, then, the first-hand evidence of an American Ambassador singularly well placed to observe and to reflect. As such, I believe that it will deserve a permanent place among the records of the World War.

Living on terms of close friendship with President Poincaré, Premier Ribot, and Premier Clemenceau, as well as with Marshals Joffre and Foch and Admiral Biard, among many others in France, Mr. Sharp's relations were equally cordial with Lord Bertie of Thame and Lord Derby, Great Britain's two War Ambassadors to France, and with Lord Balfour, the Hon. David Lloyd George, and Admiral Lord Jellicoe during their visits to Paris. He enjoyed the complete confidence of President Wilson and all his Cabinet, as well as of Generals Pershing, Bliss, and March, Admirals Benson, Sims, and Mayo, and of all of his colleagues among the Allied and Neutral Diplomatic Corps. Of the many great statesmen, generals, and admirals who were in constant conference with him, only few can be named, from lack of space, and even passing mention is scarcely possible for his numerous friends among the famous thinkers and scientists and historians of the day, such as Henri Bergson, Lucien Poincaré, Emile Boutroux, Camille Flammarion, and Gabriel Hanotaux.

Such contacts, and the vantage-point presented by the post he occupied in the French capital, provided Mr. Sharp with opportunities which were unparalleled. The fruit of all his observations is embodied in his book, with the simplicity but also with the scrupulous accuracy which distinguished him. If there were two human failings which he held in abhorrence, they were ante-chamber intrigues and idle rumours. Upon these he never wasted time in his diplomatic work, and he

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excluded them from his book. He claimed that they defeated their own purposes and could lead to no results worth considering. If one reflects upon the time devoted to them during the World War, and then upon the outcome of it all, it is difficult to disagree with Mr. Sharp's verdict.

There were other respects in which his judgments showed a striking prescience. He prophesied in March 1916 that the Germans would fail at Verdun,[1] and early in June 1918 that the American troops were about to play a decisive part in stopping the enemy's advance against Paris.[2] Similar instances will be found in most of the chapters of his Memoirs.

The most striking example of all was, nevertheless, left unmentioned by him, with characteristic modesty. The record of it was discovered by me in the unpublished Diary of his son and private secretary, my friend George C. Sharp. Under date of April 27, 1918, the following entry is written on page 77 of the linen-bound volume covering the years 1918 and 1919, the original of which lies before me as I transcribe these lines:

"Dad said this P.M. that he believes the war, which he has long termed the most 'crazy' war ever waged, will be over by November. I hope he is right in his prediction."

* * * * * *

William Graves Sharp was born at Mount Gilead, Ohio, on March 14, 1859. Educated at the High School in Elyria, to which place his mother and his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. William Graves, had moved in his early youth, he was graduated in 1877, having completed in three years a four-year course including Latin and German, with an average standing of 92½%.

But though a good student he was more than a student. Or rather, something within him told him from earliest boyhood that learning did not come from books alone. He had of course an inborn love for books. He was indeed an omnivorous reader. Those who remember his boyhood say

[1] Letter to Secretary Lansing, March 17, 1916. Chapter VIII.
[2] Telegram to Secretary Lansing, June 9, 1918. Chapter XII.

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that he was rarely seen in the street without books under his arm, on his way to or from the Ely Library when he was not bound for school. And the books that he chose were worth reading.

"There wasn't much to do in Elyria evenings except think," Mr. Sharp was quoted as saying to an interviewer when he was Ambassador, "but there was all the time in the world to do that."

So the boy learned not only to read but to think. And his thoughts led him to a thirst for the sort of knowledge which nature can bring. He was never happier than when out in the woods, fishing or nutting or exploring, or else just seeing what the birds and trees and flowers could teach him of their life.

This intimate touch with nature, as well as the close contact with his own kind which is apt to come to an ambitious boy of moderate means, knowing that he must carve his own way if he is to have any future at all, served as foundation for William Graves Sharp's Americanism. He had learned to know and love nature at her best on the continent where wild life is not even yet domesticated as it has come to be in Europe, and is not deadly as it has often proved to be in Africa. But he had also learned to see and to judge, with precociously developed senses, those with whom he was called upon to deal.

His grandfather, George W. Sharp, had been born at Frederick, Maryland, in 1800, son of John Sharp of Nottingham, England, who had married in America Anna Thompson, daughter of Dr. Robert Thompson, a surgeon attached to George Washington's staff in the Continental Army. George W. Sharp was interested in journalism, politics, and planting. Editor at twenty of the Westminster *Citizen* and later of the Frederick *Citizen Advertiser*, he was a Maryland State Senator when very young. He resolved to move West and accordingly sold his plantation and went to Ohio with his wife, Caroline Snider, and their young son, George Snider Sharp.

The father and the son then together engaged in journalism, editing successively in Ohio the Delaware *Gazette* and the

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Mount Gilead *Democratic Messenger*. It was at Mount Gilead that in 1858 George S. Sharp married Mahala Celista Graves, daughter of William and Effee Shaffer Graves. These were the parents of William Graves Sharp and his twin brother, George W. Sharp.

Wishing to study law at the University of Michigan, William Graves Sharp had to earn the money to pay his way. He worked for a while in the factory of Mr. George H. Ely, whom he left only after completing the sum needed. Graduated from Ann Arbor in 1881, he travelled for a time through the north-west, trying his hand at journalism. In the early twenties he was already at the head of a newspaper of his own at Fargo, South Dakota.

But he decided to return to Elyria, where he was admitted to the Bar. At the age of twenty-five he was elected Prosecuting Attorney for Lorain County, being the first Democrat to hold that office for a generation or more in a strongly Republican community. Yet he refused re-election.

The attractions of business had become as strong for him as the pursuit of law or of journalism. He showed thereby that he belonged to the category of men who are precocious in their general abilities but whose vocation does not declare itself at once.

In after life he liked to tell an anecdote of the dismay caused to him, in his early newspaper days, by what might have been a trifling episode to a mind less cautious and observant than his own. A tramp printer had passed through Fargo, the shiftless sort of man who is fonder of talk than of work, and being himself of the mature age of thirty, had informed young Sharp with a sneer that no man under thirty could possibly achieve success. Young Sharp started desperately reckoning up how he could manage to hold on without success till the age of thirty, but made up his mind to disregard such generalizations and just to go ahead. And he did go ahead.

When he reached the fated age of thirty he was in Central and South America on his own, travelling in Mexico, Chile and Peru, seeking to develop the charcoal-iron industry to which he was devoting himself. Having learned Spanish, he

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met with considerable success, and for a time even thought of settling in Santiago, Chile. But a revolution which broke out at the time had a discouraging effect upon him, and he decided to return to his own country. Meanwhile, at the age of twenty-seven or twenty-eight he had visited Europe, which continent he again visited some years later.

The particular genius of William Graves Sharp now guided him more and more towards producing. It was in manufacturing charcoal, pig-iron, and chemicals that he built up the fortune which eventually opened the way for his career as Ambassador. He next became interested in building.

In 1892 he was a Democratic Presidential elector. Four years later a serious question of principle faced him. He could not reconcile himself to the Free Silver doctrine introduced as a plank in the Democratic Presidential platform. In spite of the protests of many leaders in his own Party, he did not hesitate to make addresses throughout Ohio against Bryan and for the Gold doctrine, which he felt could alone assure a sound financial and economic future for his country and which therefore he placed above Party considerations.

It was by a strange coincidence that eighteen years later William Graves Sharp went as American Ambassador to France under William Jennings Bryan as Secretary of State. It proved at all events that the adverse vote of past years had left no hard feeling—and that three weeks before the outbreak of the World War the position of gold as the only practical monetary basis had been admitted.

As a boy, Mr. Sharp had been of a very pious nature; he became a member of the First Congregational Church of Elyria. He was also a great lover of home, as indeed he was throughout life. Having had the misfortune to lose his father when still young, he was to a great extent brought up by his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. William Graves. His devotion to them has remained a beautiful memory to all who knew him in his youth. And indeed, it suggests a vivid picture to my own mind—though I knew him only very much later.

It was at one of the great and inspiring emotional moments

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of the World War—the inauguration of the noble Wilson Bridge of glittering white marble spanning the swift and majestic course of the Rhône at Lyons, July 14, 1918. This was one of the scenes which Ambassador Sharp had wished to describe with care, but did not live to do it.

Engraved in gold upon the corner-stone we read the names of Edouard Herriot and William Graves Sharp, respectively Mayor of Lyons and Ambassador of the United States of America, to be handed down to posterity as those who had inaugurated the Wilson Bridge.

At an interval of the ceremonies, Mayor Herriot, standing near the stone, put a question to the Ambassador about that middle name which had been inserted by special request. Sharp, yes: but why Graves? The French are generally puzzled by the American system of using family names as Christian names.

Turning to me as interpreter, Mr. Sharp said:

"Tell the Mayor that William Graves was my grandfather who brought me up and educated me. I want his name to last as long as mine."

In the midst of those rejoicings—as impressive as any I have seen in all my life—with thousands madly acclaiming the name of Woodrow Wilson and of his envoy to France, it was not as Ambassador that Mr. Sharp saw himself. His mind had turned back through the course of the years; he was once again the orphan looking for help to the grandfather who had never failed him and had prepared the way for his career and success.

And it is in a spirit of reverence, recalling that day at Lyons, that I have put upon the title-page of Mr. Sharp's book his name, not as he signed it in abbreviated form to his despatches and letters, but as he had it engraved on the Wilson Bridge, so that the name of William Graves might be remembered.

* * * * * *

At the period when he was already making good in business, William Graves Sharp had the good fortune to marry, in 1895,

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Miss Hallie Clough, daughter of Henry Hale Clough, of North Amherst, Ohio. The marriage was more than happy. It presented one of those exceptional instances of a truly united couple whose interests in life became as one, founding a home in the old-fashioned and eternal sense of the word meaning more than a house in which a family lives. It became not only a thing of intrinsic charm, surrounded by trees and lawns and flower-beds, but a place where harmony reigned.

That was in Elyria, Ohio, where I have never been. It may be asked why I then speak with such assurance. It is because I shared frequently in the home life which Mr. Sharp organized in his Embassy, 14 avenue d'Eylau, Paris. There was about it a spirit of unity, of genuineness, of American simplicity which not even an impressive corps of formal and perfectly trained Ambassadorial domestics could spoil for a single instant.

It might be in the evening after a prolonged day of crushing work at the Chancery, which Mr. Sharp in his natural simplicity generally called "the office." It might be immediately before some important social function, a great luncheon, or dinner, or reception. It might be just the midday meal for which the family had bidden no guest save myself. Or else it might be the quiet of an early morning hour or the late evening when I was their house guest. I think I can say that I have known that Embassy in all its phases, from almost complete solitude when only one or two of the family were there, to historic occasions such as the official reception for President and Mrs. Wilson. Yet I can say that always, at all times and under all conditions, the family life led there was among the truest and most wholesome and most thoroughly American of any that I have ever known.

The family circle at the Embassy consisted of the Ambassador and Mrs. Sharp and their five children; they were joined for a while, in the winter of 1916 to 1917, by Mr. Sharp's mother, Mrs. Burrell, and by Mrs. Sharp's sister, Miss Martha Clough.

Mrs. Sharp, who made countless friends in France and came

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to be loved by them all, was singularly free from pose or affectation of any sort. Sincere and direct in her ways, always kindly by nature, spontaneous and warm of heart, she was peculiarly fitted to face the difficult conditions brought by the war in France and to organize American Relief work there.

* * * * * *

What may be called Mr. Sharp's active political career had begun only in 1908, when, without solicitation from him, and indeed in spite of his protests, his friends nominated him as Democratic candidate for Congress from the Fourteenth Ohio District. One of the reasons advanced by his friends for their insistence was his "thorough knowledge of every political detail in connection with the campaign." The result was his election with a majority of 1,600 votes in a district which had always been overwhelmingly Republican. He was re-elected in 1910 with a majority increased to 8,000 and again in 1912 with a majority of 11,000.

In Washington, Mr. Sharp had made many friends for himself while inspiring confidence by his sound good sense, his excellent judgment, his freedom from biased partisanship, as well as by the broad scope of his many-sided intellect.

Among the subjects upon which he specialized in the House of Representatives was aviation. On August 1, 1912, he made a speech explaining a bill he had introduced in Congress for the development of American aviation and authorizing the first American mail service. This bill, recorded as "H.R. 3393," eventually became a law. But his vision had gone even further. In developing his theme, Mr. Sharp had not limited himself to commercial aviation, he had forecasted the conditions under which future wars would be fought, saying that the heavier than air machine or aeroplane would not merely affect methods of transportation and scientific research, it would revolutionize methods of warfare.

Among his colleagues of the House Committee on Foreign Relations, Mr. Sharp had won an enviable reputation for his knowledge of international affairs and his well-balanced

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views, taking always into account what the other man might have to say. This legal attitude, not only weighing the evidence at hand but remaining on the alert for possible further evidence, was one of his dominant characteristics. It predisposed him to diplomatic work while protecting him against the "snap judgment" principle which, dangerous in domestic matters, becomes nothing less than deadly where foreign nations are concerned.

It was therefore by no accident, just as it was not in any way a result of his own efforts, that a diplomatic post was offered to him. Already in 1912 he had been slated for Russia, where, however, he had been judged "non grata" because of the broad and liberal attitude he advocated in his speeches. He was next suggested for the Argentine, but that post was considered scarcely important enough for him. Finally Paris was proposed by his friend Senator Pomerene with the strong backing of the Hon. Newton D. Baker, Mayor of Cleveland, who was soon after to be President Wilson's Secretary of War. Mr. Sharp had always had a great love for France: and he accepted.

* * * * * *

From this point on, he himself tells his own story very completely, yet very modestly, in his Memoirs. It is the plain story of a man called unexpectedly to assume gigantic responsibilities under unparalleled conditions. His main preoccupation throughout is manifestly stating his case as fully and fairly as he can, giving to others their due for work done. With it all, there is little or no harsh criticism. There are judgments, certainly, not all of which are flattering. But even then, the trait which was, I think, supreme in him is clearly evident. That trait was a great and enveloping kindliness for men and women and children, of all sorts and conditions; for the weak and defenceless, the wounded and the suffering, the child who was orphaned or else just abandoned and bereft of wise guidance. It extended to animals too, whether horses or dogs or the beasts of the field; and to the whole of nature, from trees and flowers and the

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very soil of the "good brown earth" to the planets and stars visible above his head and the infinity beyond, also peopled, for him, with new and marvellous worlds.

Arriving in Paris on the day before Joffre issued his immortal order for the battle of the Marne, Mr. Sharp found that the French Government had left for Bordeaux and the capital was in great part evacuated.

The United States being in charge of German interests in France, it was the elementary duty of the Ambassador in office to remain, and it was his privilege, as the representative of German interests, to negotiate if need were with the German generals for the protection of the capital. No such obligation, no such privilege belonged as yet to Mr. Sharp, since the time had not come for presenting his credentials. Nevertheless he elected to remain with his son, sharing the fate of the city.

Nearly four years later, when the peril of Paris and of France was almost as great, there was again talk of evacuation. The problem was now a far more difficult one for the French themselves. Not only might their Government have to leave so as not to be captured and held as hostages, thereby putting France at a serious disadvantage in the course of further military operations; but the enormous mass of war archives, added to ordinary official records, had to be put in safety also, and vast new offices with all their personnel had to be moved.

I have heard Mr. Sharp criticized for having considered, then, the necessity of leaving with his staff. Such criticisms show a singular lack of discernment. The situation had been completely reversed since 1914. The United States was no longer the representative of German interests, as then. It had become the belligerent most hated and most dreaded by the Central Powers. Far from holding a privileged position in which to negotiate on behalf of others, Americans would meet with a harsher fate than others. An American Ambassador who had left Paris in 1914 would have shown but slight regard for his responsibilities. One who had remained too long in 1918, compromising the freedom of his charge as

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well as the safety of his records, would equally have failed in his duty.

I say "too long," because Mr. Sharp did remain, officially, in 1918 just as he had done personally in 1914. Long after the British Embassy and other foreign diplomatic missions had taken all the measures judged needful in view of possible evacuation, he had refused to do anything. Then the American Ambassador yielded to the pressure brought upon him by his Naval staff and others, and communicated with General Pershing and with the American Red Cross for means of transportation to be put at the Embassy's disposal "if necessary"—for even then he doubted the necessity.

The story has been told differently, of course—by those who were unaware of the facts. Let them read Mr. Sharp's own testimony in his Chapter "Paris Under Fire."

Another story sometimes told differently is that of his original arrival in France.

Mr. Sharp had been appointed on June 19, 1914, but the serious illness of Mrs. Sharp, who was then barely convalescent, caused him to delay his departure with the assent of the President and the Secretary of State. The war having broken out, however, Mr. Sharp at once went to Washington. Subsequent to a conference with Secretary Bryan, he sailed for France on August 26 to join his post, as narrated in Chapter I. How and why Secretary Bryan omitted to advise the Paris Embassy of this officially is not for me to inquire into. The facts of both his designation and his confirmation by Congress, and his departure to take over his duties, were matters of official as well as general knowledge in Washington, as is proved by French Ambassador Jusserand's telegram to the French Government, noted by President Poincaré in his work *L'Invasion*.[1]

Meanwhile, Ambassador Herrick's stay in the capital had been prolonged by Mr. Sharp's inability to join his post at once. It should not be forgotten that, appointed originally by President Taft, Mr. Herrick was President Wilson's Ambassador for nearly twenty months. Not only had the

[1] Pp. 200–201. See also Mr. Sharp's own text, p. 57 and Note 3.

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war come, but there were certain Government matters having nothing to do with the war which Mr. Herrick was then winding up. It was decided that he should complete this work.

During the weeks which were to pass, Mr. Sharp had his choice of two courses. He could either remain unofficially on the field of his future activities, or he could return to his own country temporarily. He chose the obvious one of seizing an exceptional opportunity to familiarize himself with the people of France, in ways which are not available to an Ambassador already in office.

This proved to be a schooling of utmost utility to him in the four years and a half which were to follow. I sometimes wonder if he could have come to know the French people so well, and to make such devoted friends among them, if he had not spent those three months not only in France but under the new war conditions imposed upon the French, sharing in their life as a plain American citizen, as described in the opening chapters of his Memoirs.

As far as I know, that was his motive for remaining, and I think that in acting upon it he was wisely inspired. He may also have suspected what idle if not evil gossip could have made out of a temporary return home. But that is a mere surmise on my part. I recall that one of the short trips he took with George, as far as the South of England, gave rise to a story that he was returning home after renouncing his post. It was a sheer invention—forgotten eventually among the innumerable flights of the imagination engendered by the World War. One thing, however, was proved thereby: that while waiting to assume his post, Mr. Sharp's proper place was on the field of his activities to come.

From the hour of his arrival at Havre on September 2, 1914, when rumours were abroad that the Germans had reached "the gates of Paris," to the date of his sailing home aboard the *Leviathan* in April, 1919, the life of Ambassador Sharp was a singularly busy one. Indeed, it was more than busy. His time was so filled as to leave him scarcely ever a moment to himself. And apart from the numerous and often highly

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complicated duties which devolved upon him, he had the fortunate gift of being where things were going to happen.

It was thus that he witnessed from his own window on the night of September 4 to 5 the famous passage of Gallieni's taxis, bringing his testimony about their romantic appearance while readjusting their historical value (Chapter II). Although he remained in Paris during her hours of gravest danger, he had the unique experience of presenting his letters of credence at a place other than Paris—no previous American Minister or Ambassador to France having ever done as much (Chapter IV); and he achieved the distinction of being the only American Ambassador in Paris who ever became Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, following the resignation of the British Ambassador, Lord Bertie. He was at the Church of the Madeleine for a commemorative Mass, attended by his Embassy staff, in May, 1918, shortly before a Big Bertha shell struck the corner of the building; a few inches of deviation and a slight difference of time would have caused a catastrophe surpassing that of the Church of St. Gervais on Good Friday. This he mentions just incidentally in a telegram to Secretary Lansing, dated June 3, 1918 (Chapter XI). It was he who took to the French Government the news of America's rupture of diplomatic relations with Germany, of her entry into the war, and of her readiness to aid France financially now that this could be done under American law (Chapters IX and X). He was in Paris to receive General Pershing and to pass the first review of the first American troops who ever landed on French soil (Chapter X). He was at the side of President Poincaré for the inauguration of the avenue du Président Wilson, late avenue du Trocadéro, on July 4, 1918, and by the side of Mayor Edouard Herriot for the inauguration of the Wilson Bridge in Lyons, July 14, 1918. He was in the ruined town of St. Quentin three days after the German evacuation in October, 1918, and was the first civilian to enter it after the Mayor (Chapter XIV). He accompanied President Poincaré on the official trip to Alsace and Lorraine when the French Government re-entered the beloved and recovered provinces at the beginning of December,

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1918 (Chapter XVI). He was in France when President Wilson arrived, the first American President in office ever to set foot on foreign soil (Chapter XVII). And although the illness and death of his twin brother, George W. Sharp, in Ohio, caused his precipitate return home at the time of the opening of the Peace Conference, he was in France again to play his part in the dark hours weathered by the Conference from February to April (Chapter XVII).

But quite apart from the knack of being in the right place where things were happening or about to happen, he was in the bullseye of events having a character of continuity.

Charged, before we entered the war, with the onerous and at the same time delicate duty of watching over the welfare of German prisoners of war, both military and civilian, he acquitted himself in a way to merit the gratitude of both the country to which he was accredited and the enemy whose interests he was bound to defend (Chapter V). The account which he gives of this is the first complete and authentic record ever presented to the public on this important phase of America's activities during the early years of the war. The story of the *Sussex*, as he tells it, is also unique and of exceptional importance historically. For it was due to his prompt initiative and his thorough method from the very start that the fact of the torpedoing by Germany was proved (Chapter VII). He at once applied to the case his experience as a trial lawyer and later as Prosecuting Attorney in Lorain County, Ohio, just as he applied it when examining "suspects" himself at the Chancery (Chapter VI). He knew that the first thing to be done was to gather direct and irrefutable evidence on the spot. The very day after the wrecked steamer was beached at Boulogne, and before the débris could be cleared from the hull, Ambassador Sharp sent a mission of three officers to Boulogne to open an official inquiry. That was how the famous K-head, which proved that the weapon of destruction was a German torpedo, came to be found (Chapter VII).

Ambassador Gerard in Berlin mentions the importance of the telegram from Washington which caused the German

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Government to admit the presence of a submarine,[1] after not only denying it but endeavouring to disprove it. Yet he does not add that this conclusive telegram was based on Mr. Sharp's reports. Lord Bertie, the British Ambassador in Paris, mentions the proof brought by the K-head.[2] He does not add that it was supplied by Mr. Sharp, although I happen to know that he held the information from Mr. Sharp personally. And in my varied and extensive readings of war books, I do not recall seeing it even intimated anywhere else that Ambassador Sharp could have had anything to do with this important proof, which admittedly prepared the way for America's entrance into the war, since it led to the fast pledge which Germany broke, and that violation was the decisive factor in the breach of diplomatic relations.

How is it possible that Mr. Sharp has not been given credit for this? How is it possible that he has been given credit for so very little of his truly great work? We are proud of the fact that ours is a wise and scientific and historically minded period. Can the men who do the real things in life then still be overlooked, as in the old benighted days when science was unscientific and history was anything rather than historical?

Yes. They can be overlooked now, as they used to be overlooked, and as they will continue to be overlooked—for a time—when they are constitutionally formed so as not to be self-advertisers.

If there was one thing of all others abhorrent to William Graves Sharp in his natural love for simplicity, it was self-advertisement. No one who knew him could have remained long unaware of the fact. He himself stated his case on this point in a private letter he addressed on February 9, 1918, to Congressman George White, who had commented on the fact that he was "not an advertiser":

"As to your complimentary reference to my work at

[1] *My Four Years in Germany*, Chapters XII and XIX; *Face to Face with Kaiserism*, Chapter VII.

[2] *Diary of Lord Bertie*, April 2, 1916.

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Washington, devoid of advertising, I would certainly say that, fairly consistent with my public record in Congress, and surely so with a most pronounced distaste for it, I have not been much of an advertiser since coming to Paris. It takes time to advertise, as it does for everything else, and time so spent must necessarily take just that much away from devotion to real service. . . . My conception of the duties devolving upon me at this mission has been not only to give to the State Department at Washington the best service possible in a situation constantly presenting new angles, but at the same time to win and keep the confidence of the French Government. I hope I have acceptably done this."

But time has its revenges. The disadvantage of limelight is that it lasts only during the show. After, there is the memory, vivid for a while, yet with the ephemeral quality of such things as rest upon mental impressions. The record of work done is what remains and what causes revisions of history.

The Memoirs of William Graves Sharp bring the record of work ably and honestly done during more than four years of the gravest conflict the world has ever gone through, or will ever go through short of the wars which are immediately to precede Armageddon.

At the start, the hour was one when America's neutrality was eyed with distrust in France, a nation suffering as few have been called upon to suffer in modern times. Later, such expectations were placed upon America's intervention as no nation could reasonably be expected to fulfil. At no time could mere words of sympathy or mere promises of aid have sufficed in themselves. Something more was needed to make Mr. Sharp as beloved as he consistently was for four years and a half among the French. It was, I think, principally his human quality of which I have spoken, taken together with that other quality which Marshal Joffre one day expressed in a few words to me when sizing up Ambassador Sharp:

"*C'est un grand honnête homme.*"

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Nothing truer could have been said of him at all moments, as Ambassador in France as at every turn of his earlier career and to the last detail of his life:

William Graves Sharp was a great honest man.

WARRINGTON DAWSON.

Versailles,
September, 1931.

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THE WAR MEMOIRS OF WILLIAM GRAVES SHARP

CHAPTER I

REACHING MY POST UNDER DIFFICULTIES

ON the nineteenth day of June, 1914, six weeks before the declaration of war, I was named Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to France. I was then serving my third consecutive term in Congress from the Fourteenth Ohio District. At this time there were several posts of the first importance to be filled, and my name had been urged for Paris by Senator Pomerene and seconded by the Honourable Newton D. Baker, then Mayor of the City of Cleveland. My colleagues from Ohio, without my knowledge, had also recommended my selection to the President; and the Senate had paid me the compliment of confirming my nomination without the customary reference to a committee.

I tendered my resignation as a Member of the House of Representatives, and before I left Washington to make my final arrangements, Mr. Bryan, then Secretary of State, invited me to lunch with him at the University Club. It was to be quite *intime*, as M. Jusserand, the French Ambassador, was to be the only other guest.

During my six previous years in Congress, as a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, I had become pleasantly acquainted with a number of the members of the diplomatic corps. Even in those days, on account of the length of his distinguished service, M. Jusserand[1] was the Dean of the

[1] J. J. Jusserand, French Ambassador to the United States, 1902–1925. In addition to his diplomatic distinction, M. Jusserand is an author of note, having written in the English language severals works including *A Literary History of the English People*, *With Americans of Past and Present Days*, etc.

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corps at Washington. I believe he had represented France there longer than any of his predecessors. His eminent ability and tact contributed quite as much as this unusual period of service to strengthen the bonds of warm attachment which have existed from the earliest days of the two Republics. Yet I do not recall that there had ever been a time when we conversed upon matters which affected our respective countries. Now it was different. I was soon to take my leave for France, and it was my duty to become *au courant* with all questions of mutual interest.

It was this thought that undoubtedly inspired Secretary Bryan in bringing us together. At that time, early in July, the only cloud on the horizon to disturb the *entente cordiale* seemed to be occasioned by the question of assessing proper valuations for customs duties on china imported from Limoges. This subject had been the cause of considerable vexation and some bitterness of feeling on the part of the Limoges manufacturers. There had furthermore been certain complications over Lyons silks. The zeal and fidelity with which M. Jusserand advanced the cause of his countrymen, during our conversation, was an eloquent testimony to the fact that long service abroad need not lessen nor in any way compromise a diplomat's sense of first duty to the Government which he represents.

From the consideration of plans to smooth out differences over customs valuations, to meeting conditions which a mighty war suddenly imposed within a space of only a few weeks, was a transition as great in its nature as it was unexpected in its coming. Not again during the entire period of my stewardship as Ambassador did I hear of the duties on the silks of Lyons or the china of Limoges.

The delay which followed before I departed for my post was due to the very long and serious illness of Mrs. Sharp, from which she was then slowly convalescing. Soon after my appointment, I acquainted the President and Secretary Bryan with this situation. Both assured me that a reasonable delay in reaching my post would be entirely acceptable. It is a fact that in Paris, up to within a few days of the declara-

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tion of war, some of those in a position to know best were the most sceptical as to its actual coming.[1] That some day the great tragedy was inevitable all conceded, believing the time for it had not yet come. The folly of it was too great to make such a thing credible to the minds of honest-thinking men.

It was with knowledge of the changed conditions which I was to face that I left my home in Elyria, Ohio, and embarked on August 26, 1914, on *La France* for my post in Paris, accompanied by my son George.

As yet, the hidden terrors of the submarine had not come to disturb the tranquillity of those who found it necessary to face the sea. None who sailed as my fellow-passengers, however, were ignorant of the extreme gravity of the events which were so rapidly taking shape on the other side.

One of the Great Powers of Europe was seeking a death-grip at the throat of its intended victim.[2] The scenery in the great tragedy was being rapidly shifted, as if each new act demanded a change. The forts at Liége, after heroic resistance, had fallen. Even that brief interruption of the onward march of the enemy had, however, been as a veritable holding of the Pass of Thermopylae, by giving to the Allied forces time for preparation. Brussels had been occupied; the army of little Belgium had been rolled back, retreating on Antwerp

[1] M. Raymond Poincaré, President of the French Republic during the World War, and since then many times President of the Council, has recorded that on July 31 the French Cabinet was still striving "to reconcile the two sacred duties of averting a conflict and being ready if one came." Elsewhere he states that when on the morning of August 2 General Joffre, as Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the North and North-East, begged for permission to cancel the order drawing French troops back ten kilometres from the frontier so as not to be accused of aggressive designs, the Government "preferred to wait until two o'clock in the afternoon" when news arrived that the German armies had penetrated into Luxembourg. See *L'Union Sacrée*, 1914, pp. 499–502.

[2] *Cf.* the evidence of Ambassador Morgenthau in Constantinople as to Germany's preparations (*Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, pp. 3–4, 25, 41–42, 54–55, 60) and Chapter VI, *Wangenheim Tells the American Ambassador How the Kaiser Started the War* (pp. 82–89). See also Ambassador Gerard, *Face to Face With Kaiserism.*

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as a better vantage-ground for future operations. Charleroi had followed Liége, and the gallant British troops, outnumbered by more than two to one, had retreated from Mons. The advance forces of the enemy had already entered upon the soil of France. The seven days during which I was *en route* might hold the virtual decision of the war.

The situation was reflected in the character of our passenger list. Naturally, under such conditions, this was tinged with a decided military colour. Many of the younger men, French by birth or descent, were returning to do battle for their country. They had come from every quarter of America, and not even the parting with those most dear to them had dampened the enthusiasm with which they had received the call to arms.

The study of each of my fellow-passengers under such unusual conditions was interesting. In addition to the "reservists" there were those who had seen experience in other wars, veterans who were hurrying to the call to arms. Unconsciously, I could not but speculate upon what Fate had in store for them. Could I have looked into the future, which was to be so long obscured by the smoke of battle, as well as by the uncertainties of the outcome, my wonder would have grown.

The list of passengers included nurses and other relief workers on their way to missions of mercy, short as had been the progress of the conflict. They were the white-aproned and white-capped forerunners of those angels of mercy who later came over by the thousand to bind the wounds of dying heroes. Of war correspondents there were also a number, sent over by the big American dailies. During the months that followed, I learned from many sources of the splendid manner in which this class of men had discharged their missions. Their engagements at times required the hardest kind of work, not unmixed with danger. The Western world is indebted to them for the vast amount of information which only the exercise of the highest degree of enterprise and talent could have supplied.

Not the least in interest of the experiences afforded by the

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motley lot of my fellow-passengers was that to be found in a coloured missionary, an aged Minister of the Gospel, who was returning to his field of work among the savage tribes of Africa. How incongruous the thought that, while his professedly Christianized white brothers dwelling in the enlightened countries of Europe were carrying on the most brutal war known to history for the extermination of their fellow-men, this aged missionary was to preach among his followers from darkest Africa the doctrine of brotherly love.

As I disembarked from *La France* at Havre, in the early morning of the second day of September, 1914, Mr. Osborne, our Consul, introducing himself to me, asked:

"Have you heard the latest reports? Do you know that the German troops are at the very gates of Paris?"

These questions came as a startling surprise. During the voyage, I had read only very brief wireless messages set forth in bulletins posted at the head of the staircase of the steamer. These, while not of a reassuring nature, had not given the slightest intimation of the real situation.

I shall never forget the scene indicative of gravely disturbed conditions which greeted us. The advance horde of unfortunate tourists, who had tarried so long in Paris to connect directly with any kind of craft that would carry them to England or to America, had already reached the city. The hotels were crowded. In the streets, the rich jostled the poor. Among the former was the head of one of America's greatest steel corporations, who had engaged in advance most of the rooms in one of the more modern hotels for the accommodation of his numerous personnel. Many, having little money left after purchasing their return tickets, became dismayed at the thought of being compelled to remain at additional expense in a strange land.

There was in evidence everywhere that kind of hurly-burly the counterpart of which one might see in some new Western mining town where an Eldorado had been discovered. Surely the exactions of human nature were strangely modified by the stress of necessity. The discomforts of a cabin in the

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steerage looked very inviting to many who had never before understood the social problems which poverty imposes upon the immigrant. It is more than probable that in many such cases this experience had fallen to the lot of their ancestors who, a half century before, had come to America to seek those opportunities which their native land could not give.

While arrangements were being made for my departure for Paris, Major Henry, who had come down from that city on the previous day by direction of the American Embassy, asked me if I would not be interested in inspecting the French liner *La Touraine*, then about to sail. His mission was to examine steamship accommodations and to arrange, as far as possible, for the comfort of departing Americans. I gladly accepted his invitation.

The ship was one of the older class of French steamers. She was being fitted out in such a manner as to accommodate several times her normal passenger list. This was plainly evidenced when, on going through the vessel, I saw that from top to bottom, even to the very hold, improvised state-rooms were being made. Many of them had nothing but cloth partitions between them. Even in such compartments four or five passengers had to be contented during the voyage. But its bow was pointed westward, and to them that was homeward. Later in the war, not a few of them came back to tender their good offices of mercy in the manifold needs of France.

A distinguished fellow-passenger on the voyage over had been Mr. Robert Bacon,[1] former American Ambassador to France. One day, about midway on our voyage, he had introduced himself to me, and I then learned for the first time that he was on board. What his mission was, if he had any, in returning to Paris at that particular time, I never learned. I gathered from our talks, however, that he was simply one of the numerous Americans whose former tem-

[1] Robert Bacon, 1860–1919, Secretary of State January–March, 1909, Ambassador to France 1909–1912, Major U.S.A. 1917 on the staff of General Pershing with the A.E.F. in France.

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porary residence among the French people had drawn them to that country in its hour of need.

Hearing the alarming news of the enemy's progress, Mr. Bacon hesitated for no little time before coming to a decision. He said to me, "Just before I left New York, my wife made me promise that I would be back at the end of a month. I am greatly puzzled to know what to do, for I fear that if I once get into Paris I may not soon be able to get out again." Having in mind evidently the experience of the memorable siege of Paris in '70–71, and not being provided with a balloon like the one in which Gambetta made his sensational escape over the German lines, his concern was comprehensible. However, he decided to proceed on his journey, upon being assured by one of the attachés of the American Embassy, just coming on the scene, that the situation was not as critical as had been thought.

My own accepted obligation, regardless of the conditions which might confront me, was to proceed to Paris as quickly as possible. There was imposed on me but little responsibility in making the journey, accompanied, as I was, only by my eldest son, a boy not yet seventeen years of age. Travelling by railroad had already become uncertain, and there was also danger of bridges being blown up by advancing Uhlans[1] at different points along the line. To meet such an emergency, I was informed that M. Louis Jaray, of the *Comité France-Amérique*, was there with two military cars to convey us to Paris.[2] It was a generous thoughtfulness from an organization whose high purposes I came to know better in later days. Though I hope to take occasion in subsequent pages to refer more at length to the splendid work of the *Comité France-*

[1] M. Clemenceau wrote in *L'Homme Libre* of July 15, 1914: "M. Charles Humbert, Reporting Secretary of the Senate Army Committee, informed us yesterday that we have allowed ourselves to be outdistanced by Germany in the scientific use of modern armaments, and that our position to-day resembles that in 1870. . . . The Minister of War has admitted that most of the facts advanced by M. Humbert are 'probably exact.'" *La France devant l'Allemagne*, p. 79.

[2] It was subsequently learned that the two cars put at Mr. Sharp's disposal had been requisitioned from Madame Sarah Bernhardt.

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Amérique,[1] I may here say that the acquaintance made with M. Jaray, that day, ripened into a sincere regard for one who so constantly showed his friendly interests in everything American. Of good family and independent means, he zealously devoted his time to advancing the work of the Society to which he had consecrated himself.

At about the same time a representative of the city of Havre came to present his compliments. He assured me that his good offices were at my disposal in any way that might be found useful—a manifestation of that spirit of goodwill and helpfulness which, during all the years of my stay to follow, I found exemplified in the conduct of French officials.

Leaving Havre about four o'clock on the afternoon of our arrival, two hours later we began the descent of the winding slope of the long, deeply shadowed hill which overlooks Rouen and the tortuous Seine. The fifty or more miles of country through which we had travelled were of incomparable beauty. A ride through Normandy in the harvest season indeed possesses peculiar attractiveness. If the orchards are famous for their wealth of bloom in the Spring, the ripening fruit of Autumn gives to the Norman country no less charm. A noted American divine has said that the only mistake which the Creator made, in the building of the world, was that he had not endowed apple blossoms with souls. His regret might have been all the more poignant could he have travelled through these orchards in their blossoming season. In all her diadem of jewels—the ancient Provinces of France, each with its wealth of tradition and charm of scenery—none is more beautiful than Normandy.

But if Nature, both in beauty of landscape and fertility of soil, has been so beneficent to France, no little of her interest to the traveller lies in the numerous châteaux and abbeys, whose foundations often date back to the days of her earliest kings. They bespeak a rare artistic conception which our modern architects have faithfully striven to imitate.

[1] See Chapter X. M. Gabriel Louis Jaray, Maître des Requêtes of the French Council of State, is to-day President of the Executive Commission of the *Comité France-Amérique*.

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It was hard to believe, amid the scenes of pastoral beauty which revealed themselves to us at every turn in our winding road that afternoon, that the country was in a state of war. Such a horrible thing was in direct contradiction to every thought inspired by such an environment. But each moment drew us nearer to its reality. Even before the rising of to-morrow's sun the roar of the cannon of the enemy was to be faintly heard in the streets of Paris.

Late that afternoon we reached Rouen, the ancient capital of Normandy, rich in the tradition of mediaeval times, though the interest of the visitor is saddened by the martyrdom of Jeanne d'Arc. In passing through the narrow crowded streets, I could not resist the temptation to pause a few minutes on the broad open *Place* in front of the majestic pile of the Cathedral. Its very impressiveness impelled me to enter. As I stood within its portals among the crowded worshippers, for those brief moments, thoughts came to me which in future years I found best expressed by the lines of Maurice Barrès, the noted French author and statesman, in his inspired little volume, "The Faith of France":

"From the dark shadows of our churches, the wax tapers burn—and the crowd presses forward to kneel beneath their light. The Protestant chapel resounds with exhortations, the ancient synagogue, with sounds of sorrow; and he who passes by these holy places, he who enters not, stands without and whispers a benediction. Houses of prayer, houses of refuge, we beseech you to aid the soldiers of France!"

But to-day young men were gathered there—those whom the call of duty would soon lead hence, never to return. Some were in the uniform of commissioned officers, others dressed as simple *poilus*. About them, kneeling in devotion or passing out as new ones came in to take their places, were dark-veiled women and old men bent with age—the mothers and fathers of young soldiers already at the front. He who would properly assess the heroic part played, in this great war, by the soldiers of France, must not ignore that element which contributed quite as much to its winning as their courage—their religious fervour, which seemed to gain strength from

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the very dangers before them. As our little party left the portals of that temple of worship, I carried away a lasting remembrance of the sweet music softly diffusing itself from the great organ above me. But I had witnessed also the visible evidence of that faith which did so much to sustain the spirit of France during the four awful years to follow.

Regaining our automobiles, we were soon rapidly crossing the long bridge over the Seine.

I shall never forget the incidents of our all-night ride which followed, so dramatically staged by the historic events of those early September days. Being the time of the harvest moon, its light shone with unusual brilliancy. Every village and hamlet through which we sped stood out with spectral vividness. We had now left behind us the only large city through which we were to pass until we should reach Paris, ninety miles away. Even before getting out of Havre we had already come to know that we were in a country in a state of war. Barricades of barbed wire and trunks of trees, in some cases covered with an impenetrable mass of pine boughs to obscure the view, had been hastily thrown across the highway before even the city limits had been reached. Only the narrowest possible space was left for the passage of vehicles in single file. Behind these barricades stood armed sentinels challenging the way.

Many times throughout the night similar experiences were encountered. Sometimes a more than usually obdurate guard was met with, who must be doubly sure not only that we were friends, but that he had fully discharged his own duties. The very air was tense with portent. Sensible that with each mile of our journey we were approaching toward the enemy's line of advance, caution was the watchword.

As the night wore on, the faint gleaming of the lights in the upper windows of the houses of the little villages through which we passed became less frequent. Only the fitful glow of some corner street-lamp was to be seen in most of these towns. Not until ten o'clock in the evening did we halt at an inn in the little town of Pacy-sur-Eure for a hastily improvised dinner. Even at that hour there were others being

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served, their military automobiles standing in the road. They were French officers charged with important duties.

A half-hour later we were again on our way. Occasionally, as we rounded a curve—straight streets are rare in French villages—and the chauffeur sounded his approach, a window in one of the low quaint buildings would here and there be raised, and the occupant, curious to know the cause of the noise, would protrude his head. As we proceeded southward, M. Jaray directed our course further away from the banks of the Seine. Since every hour was freighted with increasing uncertainty, and there was the probability of the enemy enveloping Paris from the north, this precaution was wisely taken.

While speeding along at a rapid rate at one point of the journey, having fallen into a slight slumber, I was suddenly awakened by a terrific bumping of our car; we had run off the roadway over a low curbing. Only the prompt action of the chauffeur, and the absence of the ever-present line of trees along the highway, saved us from serious consequences. It was explained that the chauffeur had himself fallen asleep, after having passed through forty-eight continuous waking hours, caused by his having spent the night before in bringing M. Jaray down to Havre to meet us.

I inquired of M. Jaray as to the propriety of my giving a *pourboire* to the chauffeur. He replied with much tact and characteristic politeness, that inasmuch as this soldier was one of the most prominent of the younger lawyers of Paris, he did not think any remuneration was expected. The fact was, that at that early stage of the war every Frenchman capable of military service had gone to the front, and I have no doubt but that my lawyer-chauffeur nobly did his part on the field of honour long before the war ended.

Some time after midnight we passed through the darkened streets of the ancient town of Dreux. We now turned sharply toward the east along the main travelled highway to Paris, fifty miles away. Next we went through St. Cyr, where is located one of the great military schools of France.

Soon after leaving this place, as yet long before sunrise, we

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were finally to meet the most inquisitive challenge of our journey. Already a score of barricades had been passed through the intermediation of our good friend of the *France-Amérique*. At Versailles, however, even his earnest representations failed to prevent our automobiles from being compelled to turn back to the office of the *Préfet*, and there wait until instructions by telephone had been given. For the time, we were prisoners of war. After a half-hour's delay we were permitted to go on.

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CHAPTER II

THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE

THOUGH I should pass a hundred times the yellowed *façade* and the stately walls of the Palace of Versailles, I could never forget the impressive, almost unearthly appearance which it presented that night as we passed it in the lengthening shadows of the waning moonlight. Tragic though the history of this splendid pile has been, recording, as it unhappily does, some of the saddest experiences of the French people, yet hopes such as are found in the realm of dreams were here to become realities—and this time all for France. Had not Fate decreed that out of the sufferings of that hour and the sacrifices to be endured during the long struggle to follow, she was to help dictate, behind those walls, the terms of peace made possible by a victory incomparable in its achievements?

In this palace on the eighteenth of January, 1871, surrounded by Princes and Generals, King William of Prussia had been proclaimed German Emperor. The great drama which had been enacted here nearly forty-four years before was to have a recasting. But it must first call for the sacrifice of the lives of a million and a half of the bravest sons of France. And the lives of an equal number of her Allied defenders must also be thrown into this fiery crucible which was so to try the souls of men.

The ride into Paris some fifteen miles away was uneventful, and at four o'clock on the morning of Thursday, the third of September, our automobiles stopped in front of the Hotel Crillon, Place de la Concorde, which was to be my home until the other members of my family came to join me, early in the following Spring.

On the morning following my arrival, the German troops had reached the nearest point to Paris to which destiny had

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decreed they should come. On that very day, too, realizing that in union alone was their strength in the face of the imminent danger for them all, notice of the signing at London of the famous declaration of the "Triple Entente" had been sent out by M. Delcassé.[1]

The French Government—the President of the Republic, the Ministry and Parliament—had already left for Bordeaux, where a temporary capital was to be established. With them, except the American, had also departed the members of the diplomatic corps, representing both the Allied and most of the neutral Powers.

In the hushed quiet of those early morning hours, one heard in Paris the booming of the enemy cannon less than twenty miles away. During that day the *Tauben* of the Germans in unusual numbers had been flying high over the city, leisurely making their observations. Great crowds from the streets below had been watching with feverish interest their movements. But if their first appearance had created any alarm, curiosity soon got the better of it, even though it was known that some of them carried the bombs of destruction which had already found victims to mangle. At the end of a few days of such experiences, enterprising landlords found a profit in renting seats on their roofs to spectators who eagerly craned their necks in keen anticipation of being the first to see the coming of these enemy planes. Features of a regularly staged matinée were not absent.

Before the rising of another sun, the fate of Paris might be decided—or indeed, the fate of France and the Allied cause. The oncoming sweep of a million trained soldiers of the greatest military power in Europe must be stopped and turned back. By successfully holding their ground for another twenty-four hours, the Germans might be able to plant their big guns for the actual shelling of Paris. Had not everyone, even to the remotest parts of France, already heard of their "frightfulness"? Paris on that day, as for the next four

[1] For this and other official documents of the period, see the 1914 *French Yellow Book, English Blue Book, Belgian Grey Book, Serbian Blue Book,* the two *Russian Orange Books,* and the *German White Book.*

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years, was destined to be the focal point upon which the eyes of the entire world were riveted.

How strangely was history repeating itself! Forty-four years before, even to the very day, the heart-breaking news had come to Paris of the fall of Sedan and the capture of the Emperor by this same enemy. The French army, under Marshal MacMahon, had suffered a disastrous defeat. The news was prophetic of the final triumph of Prussian arms. On the night of that never-to-be-forgotten day the Paris populace, amid scenes of greatest turmoil and passion, had cried "*A bas Napoléon!*" and the abdication of the Emperor had been demanded. So quickly did events move that on the following afternoon the brilliant Gambetta had dramatically proclaimed the birth of the new Republic of France before a great throng of people. After these many years, was the same fate to come again to French arms? Not so.

This time there was an unconquerable power behind them. It was the power of right. The consciousness of fighting under the banners of such a cause measured the difference between success and failure, victory and defeat. The spirit which inspired officer and *poilu*, now gathered to do battle on the fields of the Marne, was assuredly different from that which had imbued the followers of Napoleon III when he took command of his army late in July, 1870. From every lip came now the cry: "*Union sacrée!*" Along the Champs-Elysées was not heard, as on that other day, the expression of "*A Berlin en huit jours!*" But there was an exalted purpose to place upon the altars of sacrifice the last drop of French blood for the triumph of liberty, justice, and humanity. Not from the first crucial days until the end of the war was there a letting down of this spirit.

Just a month before, August 4, President Poincaré had addressed an epochal Message to Parliament. Every member of the Chamber of Deputies was standing and rapturously applauding, when Premier Viviani read the words in which the President voiced the feelings of the French people:[1]

[1] The Presidential Message was read simultaneously at the Senate by M. Bienvenu-Martin, Keeper of the Seals and Minister of Justice.

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"In the war which is beginning, France will have Right on her side, the eternal power of which cannot with impunity be disregarded by nations any more than by individuals. She will be heroically defended by all her sons; nothing will break their sacred union before the enemy; to-day they are joined together as brothers in a common indignation against the aggressor, and in a common patriotic faith.

"She is faithfully helped by Russia, her Ally; she is supported by the loyal friendship of England. And already, from all parts of the civilized world, sympathy and good wishes are being given to her. For to-day, once again, she stands before the Universe for liberty, justice, and reason.

"*Haut les cœurs et vive la France!*"[1]

No better interpretation of the purposes of the French nation could have been made than was contained in these words. Coming to know M. Poincaré as I did during the trying times to follow, they were indicative of that strength and poise which he brought to the support of his country during its hours of peril.

At this same memorable session of Parliament, M. René Viviani,[2] the Premier, in a speech of rare power and eloquence, had laid before the Chamber the tragic story leading up to the declaration of war. He read the letter which he had received the day before from Ambassador von Schoen, who had represented the Imperial German Government at Paris. In this letter the Ambassador had asked to be furnished with passports permitting him to leave France, and assuring his safe return to Germany. The Premier's speech was a masterly exposition of the relation and significance of each international event which had brought on the crisis. I do not recall, in reading the official accounts given by the several belligerent Powers of the actuating events, anything which surpasses the

[1] For this and other speeches made at the historic sitting of the French Chamber of Deputies on August 4, see the *Journal Officiel de la République Française*, August 5, 1914, and also Raymond Poincaré, *L'Union Sacrée*, 1914.

[2] René Raphael Viviani had accompanied President Poincaré on his visit to Russia in July 1914. He went with Marshal Joffre on an official mission to the United States in 1917, returning on another mission in 1921. He died in 1925.

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summary set forth in this speech of the Premier. In reading his peroration, those who are familiar with the style of oratory of the brilliant Viviani, quite in a class by itself, will again see before them the image of the great French orator. The uplifted arm, the whole figure trembling with emotion, the voice with such charm of melody, the rapid flow of words tumbling over each other like the waters of a Niagara, at times his face upturned as though he would draw his inspiration from the very skies—I have sometimes thought him to be a reincarnated Mirabeau.

On that day, swayed by their emotions, members of Parliament who had for years led bitterly opposing factions excitedly embraced each other. A common danger, a common love of country, had united France as never before.

Two days later, Mr. Asquith had defined with great clearness in the House of Commons the position of Great Britain. Von Bethmann-Hollweg, Chancellor of the Imperial German Government, had already made his appeal in the Reichstag, in which he had made the admission, as astonishing as it was frank, that necessity knowing no international law, the rights of Belgium as well as of Luxembourg had been wilfully violated by the armies of Germany. The Chancellor had also asserted that French airmen had already dropped bombs on railway tracks far into southern Germany. Perhaps no official declaration during the war was more vehemently contradicted. From intimate talks with French officials, including the positive statement made to me by Marshal Joffre, I am satisfied that there was never the slightest ground for such a charge.[1] At the time of this speech, not definitely aware of

[1] All French authorities, both civil and military, have consistently agreed in their emphatic and circumstantial denials of any such violations by France or any isolated frontier aggressions by her prior to the formal declaration of war. It is, however, of particular interest to note the evidence produced from German sources by a French officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Reginald Kann, to show how the assertions of French violations were fabricated: *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Vol. III, No. 664; Vol. IV, No. 758; Vol. III, No. 677; Vol. IV, No. 797; Vol. IV, No. 869; Vol. IV, No. 876. Lieutenant-Colonel Tappen, *Bis zur Marne*, p. 10. See Reginald Kann, *Le Plan de Campagne allemand de 1914 et son exécution*, pp. 69–72.

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the future course of action of the British Government, the Chancellor had frankly accorded to Sir Edward Grey due praise for his earnest effort to avert the war.

But if the statesmen of the various belligerent countries had thus spoken, a great soldier of Britain had made a remarkable appeal to the troops of the British army. Through instructions issued by Lord Kitchener to every soldier in the expeditionary forces, a striking appeal had been made to the sense of duty to country. First pointing out to them the need of courage, energy, and patience, he counselled them by their conduct to show their character as true British soldiers to the peoples of the foreign countries in which they were to fight.

I know from a conversation held much later with General Pershing upon the subject of the Kitchener instructions that he was deeply impressed with them. He also made a stirring appeal to the manhood of the American soldier. This was printed under his picture and widely circulated. To the lasting credit of our American boys, amidst unusual temptations in a foreign land, be it said that the soldiers of no other belligerent country were better behaved than they.

During the thirty days preceding my arrival, the news dispatches every hour had told of fresh advances by the enemy, of new destructions of towns and of increased brutal outrages upon their defenceless people. There was nothing left to conjecture as to the fate which awaited towns yet untaken. The despairing cry of those already fallen had travelled fast and far. These were the crucial conditions that confronted Paris. For one who had been familiar with the everyday life of the city in times of peace, to understand the transformation which had come over a city, famed for the cosmopolitan crowds on its streets, its sociability and gaiety, the change in the appearance of everything, except its inanimate objects, could only be explained by the occurrence of events of dynamic import. The very knowledge that such conditions existed, and were soon to reach their climax, contributed in no little measure to the strangeness of everything about me.

Some three days after my arrival in Paris, I saw from my front windows, overlooking the Place de la Concorde, a most

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unusual sight; one to which the events of the following few days lent historic interest.

At about two o'clock in the morning, I was suddenly awakened by what was taking place on the streets below me. Not so much the volume of the noise as its peculiar character had aroused me from sound slumber. As I listened, it seemed as though some endless cortège of vehicles was passing monotonously by. Curious to know what was taking place, I arose and went to the windows.

There below me in the subdued light of the street lamps, I saw a most remarkable spectacle. Like two huge winding serpents, one slowly coming from the Champs-Elysées diagonally across the Place de la Concorde to the rue Royale, the other extending from across the Seine over the Pont de la Concorde, I saw a line of automobiles and taxicabs, closely packed together. Except for the driver, they were all empty. How many had gone before I do not know, but certainly many hundreds were yet to come. After the automobiles came many open carriages, followed by a larger and more nondescript type of vehicle, each so close to the one in front that no one could have passed between them. It seemed that every sort of conveyance having wheels had been called into requisition. Though I realized that some movement of military importance was being carried out, yet not for some time afterwards did I learn that these vehicles had been employed in the transportation of the troops of Gallieni to fight in the battle of the Marne.

In the popular mind, there has been undoubtedly a great deal of exaggeration as to the importance which can be properly assigned to the part played by these troops. But the unusual manner of transporting them to the scene of action possesses an interest quite out of the ordinary, even among the many unique features which characterized the war. The unromantic fact remains that the execution of this plan for the transportation of men to the battle-front failed in a large measure of its main purpose of promptness. This was owing to numerous delays, breaking down of equipment, lack of sufficient gasoline, mistakes as to the proper roads, lack of

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unity in speed or co-ordination in movements, etc., compelling many of the troops to continue their march on foot, and stranding others so that they were found only after the battle. This, however, in no way detracts from the originality and boldness of the conception.[1]

A little more than a week after witnessing this scene, I was given the opportunity of visiting this historic battlefield, at that time still uncleared of its dead.

Leaving Paris early in the morning, our party soon reached Meaux, which had been the nearest town of importance occupied by the German troops. The party included, besides my son and myself, Mr. Benjamin Conner, a prominent lawyer of Paris, and Mr. Oscar W. Underwood, Jr., son of the distinguished Senator from Alabama. Both of these young men later won distinction as soldiers in the American Army.

As we proceeded north from Meaux, it was as though we entered territory over which some mighty cyclone had passed; or as if some pent-up torrent, breaking away, had swept on, engulfing everything in its path, and then receding, had left a mountain of débris scattered promiscuously about. Strangely enough, here and there were wide places along the highway where one could look in vain across the fields for the footprints of horses or men. In their ripening products of husbandry, they were as calm and undisturbed as in the midst of some vale of peace. But as we went further north, the evidences of the terrible battle accumulated. It must have been terrific along the roadway itself, where hastily improvised defences and shallow trenches had temporarily afforded protection to the troops on either side. Great quantities of shell-cases and cartridges were scattered about. Huge trees, thirty inches in diameter, had been splintered by the bursting shells. In many instances they had been severed as though by the blows

[1] Marshal Gallieni himself does not seem to have attached great importance to the requisition of the famous taxi-autos. He mentions them in his Memoirs as not intended to transport troops from Paris but to concentrate at Gagny and Noisy-le-Sec and there be loaded with infantrymen bound for Nanteuil-le-Haudoin. He visited Gagny on the 7th and found the taxis ready to begin this work, the battle having begun September 6. (See *Mémoires du Maréchal Gallieni*, pp. 149–150, 154.)

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of an axe. A very inferno must have reigned at such points. Here along the roadway was a broken aeroplane, so full of holes that its sides presented the appearance of a sieve. Slim chance for the poor fellow who had guided it through the air—fallen as one of thousands.

But the tragic scene of our journey came when we found, as yet undisturbed, over portions of the battlefield, the bodies of many soldiers lying just as they had fallen, some with faces upturned to the pitiless rain of an equinoxial storm. In one part of the field I saw a row of corpses of French soldiers, placed side by side; near by, another of the Germans. Here was one whose age betokened a fireplace around which fatherless children were gathered waiting in vain for his coming—never to know when or where he had fallen. Others were of young men, the pride of their mothers' hearts. I was told that only a short distance to the west one single huge grave had been dug, in which the corpses of two thousand of these soldiers were buried. Bridges had been blown up, making a wide détour necessary. Some of the towns through which we passed had but roofless houses left, deserted by everything that had life to tell of the sweep of the contending forces. The Valley of the Marne, of such enchanting beauty a few days before, had been converted into a veritable Valley of Death.

Arriving at about noon in the little village of Courmelles, less than two miles from Soissons, we had reached the end of a journey the recollection of whose tragic scenes can never fade from my memory. Just opposite Soissons, the German troops were entrenched, and we immediately found ourselves witnesses to a fierce artillery duel. The sequel of the bombardment of this devoted town, noted even in the time of Clovis and Alaric the Visigoth, was to be written in the ruined streets, crumbling houses, and shattered Cathedral.

The sight that greeted us was a strange one. With the French troops were many colonials from Africa—Moroccans I would say. With the picturesque head-dress of their country, their loose-flowing military garb, their black, dwarfed beards and swarthy countenances, they were in strange

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contrast to the scene about them. A few weeks later I saw thousands of other dark-skinned warriors from the Far East riding so gracefully through the streets of Orléans, as they came up from the south, that they seemed to be a very part of the animals which bore them.

Just as our party alighted, two young Americans rushed out of the big doorway of one of the buildings near which we had left our car and excitedly greeted us as their deliverers. They then told us, with expressions of the greatest emotion, that they had been kept as prisoners for the preceding two days by the Army officers. They had unwittingly tempted fate by entering the military zone without due authority—and that too, so near to the firing line that our party was solemnly warned that stray enemy shells might find their way at any moment into our midst. One of these young men, Mr. Dewitt Poole, was at the time a vice-consul at Paris, and later won an enviable reputation as our chargé d'affaires at Moscow, from November, 1918 to June, 1919. The other was Mr. Charles Loeb, a prominent member of the Paris bar. Even our recognition of them, and vouching for their standing, failed to do more than ameliorate their condition temporarily.

In my effort to help them, there occurred a striking illustration of what a division of authority assumed or otherwise may do. Only its tragic consequences, for the time, to our unfortunate friends prevented it from partaking of the character of a comedy. Being told that the Colonel in command had his headquarters in a château but a short distance away, I called to explain to him the unpleasant situation of my countrymen.

It was my first experience with French military officers, and only the desire to be of help to Americans in a serious predicament seemed to justify my intercession. With no little embarrassment, after being ushered into the Colonel's presence and invited to be seated, I asked Mr. Conner to explain in his best French the object of my call.

The Colonel's manner was most cordial, and after hearing with every mark of sympathy the facts as they were told to him, he immediately consented to the release of the prisoners.

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Quickly returning to the place where they were held, I made known the good news. It was greeted with a show of the greatest satisfaction by those to whom it meant so much. But their joy was short-lived. The other officer, by whose authority they had been detained, refused point-blank to let them accompany our party back to Paris. Again Mr. Conner's French was appealed to. With a due respect for the authority before which he was, having in mind the rules governing the offence of contempt of court, I am sure this American lawyer never pleaded with more earnestness for any client than he did that day for our friends. But it was all in vain.

Seeing the hopelessness of the situation, I assured the two young men that every endeavour would be made, upon my return to Paris, to secure their immediate release. That night, I caused news of their predicament—and in fact of their real danger, for they were charged with transgressing all military rules at a time when the fate of France hung in the balance—to be sent to the French authorities.

They were released on the following day.

Our party set out for the return trip to Paris. We had now before us a disagreeable ride of nearly seventy miles in a driving rain. As we proceeded, time and again we encountered returning refugees, with their big two-wheeled wagons, pulled usually by one horse, sometimes by two in single file. These were piled high with the meagre furniture with which they had so hurriedly fled but a few days before. On top of this would be seated sometimes the entire family. Often behind such a load would follow the cow, their only remaining possession. To what were they returning? Alas! they were fortunate indeed if they found a roof to cover their heads. In many places not even standing walls remained of what were once their homes. Later, owing to the changing fortunes of war, many of these poor people were dispossessed twice, and in some instances three times, by the succeeding waves of the advancing and retreating forces. When the full inhumanity of this destructive warfare had been fairly launched, such returning refugees were lucky if they found even the agricultural implements and standing fruit-trees which had been

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the source of their livelihood. That night I returned to Paris with my first realization of what the war actually meant, and with a heart made heavy by the horrors that must follow such a beginning.

As typical of the experiences of some of these sufferers following the invasion of the German troops immediately preceding their reaching the Marne, I may relate the story which was told to me by an American, Major Sellers, himself a refugee for the time. Upwards of eighty years of age, this old patriot had fought in the American Civil War, enlisting as a private from my own State of Ohio. He was spending his declining years indulging his bent as an artist, among some of the charming scenes so often encountered in the byways of France. He lived in a small French town directly on the line of march of the Uhlans.

Having this old soldier-artist as a luncheon guest at the Embassy one day, I listened as he modestly told of the part which he and his niece, who lived with him, had played in those battle days of the Marne.

News of the advance had travelled very rapidly throughout that entire section, he explained. Many people had left their homes in terror. Others were compelled, for one cause or another, to remain behind and accept the fate of German occupation. Major Sellers and his niece had given their limited stock of food to fleeing refugees. First their own supply of provisions was exhausted; then this was supplemented by articles they were enabled to buy with the ready money in their possession. All went to alleviate the suffering of those who, in utmost distress, knew not which way to turn for food or shelter. From an unusual opportunity for observation, it is my pleasure to say that in so doing this Good Samaritan of American birth had but shown that altruism which everywhere characterized the acts of his countrymen during the war.

Being an American citizen, he had no concern for his personal safety.

"When I heard of the approach of the Germans through the vanguard of the fleeing people," he said, "I looked about

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me for an American flag, that I might place it over my doorway. No such thing was to be found. In a quandary as to how I might supply such a want, I seized a shingle and on this I painted an American flag and placed it on my easel. This I planted in a conspicuous place in my front yard. A little later the advancing column of the German army came sweeping through the town. As they came on, they took possession of this or that building, according to their needs, spreading terror among the people about them. As one of the officers halted before my cottage, I pointed to the emblem of my country, and said that, as an American citizen, I claimed immunity for myself and my property. I was quickly assured that no harm would come to me, but I must supply their wants of food from my garden. Some of these soldiers hurriedly helped themselves to such vegetables as they could find, and ravenously devoured them with great relish. They told me that they had had no food for several days."

Though his six feet of stature was bent with his burden of four-score years, the old veteran's voice was full and resonant. With deep-set eyes that looked straight at you, and a broad and firm chin sufficiently protruding to give indication of the fearlessness with which he might meet any danger, it is not surprising that but little persuasion was needed to compel both respect as well as protection from the hands of the Uhlans. They must have seen in this old man something of the fire and energy which had made him a valiant soldier on many a battlefield of another great war, more than a half-century before.

Much later, I had the opportunity of discussing at length with Marshal Joffre the stirring incidents of the battle which gave to him immortal fame, and to France the very freedom of her existence. Sitting in the modest front room of his comfortable Paris home, one afternoon, he told me a most interesting story of some of the outstanding events between the twenty-fifth of August and the tenth day of September, 1914, which blasted the ambitious hopes of an empire and at the same time furnished a fateful augury of its ultimate collapse.

I enjoyed that kind of friendship with the distinguished

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Marshal which only a long-standing mutual confidence can give. He was very fond of everything American, and his visit to our shores at a critical time during the progress of the war had only served to increase his admiration for our people and their institutions.

At the conclusion of my talk with the Marshal, he said to me: "There! I have told the whole story of the battle of the Marne for the first time." Perhaps this statement may explain an amusing story which I heard in connection with an account of the battle of the Marne, which an eloquent speaker was giving at a banquet on a certain occasion. The story goes that Marshal Joffre, being one of the honoured guests, after listening to the speech until its conclusion, turned around toward the gentleman sitting beside him and said: "I did not catch the name of the battle of which he was speaking. Will you please tell it to me?"

As I looked into those calm, blue eyes—which are said to go so often with military genius—and studied the latent force within that massive frame, I could well understand one of the reasons for the victory of the Marne. One might as well try to push over a building as try to move such a man against his will. Modest and simple to an almost extreme degree, his nature impresses one as being a natural force which exists as a matter of course. If men encounter it, they must choose either to be stopped or go around it. Slow and deliberate of speech, as if giving careful thought to each word, one is impressed with the conviction of hearing from the lips of such a man only the truth. There is no guile and no expression of feeling that would indicate unfounded prejudice.

Just as some little article of bric-à-brac might becomingly adorn the mantel of a small room, and would be equally inappropriate when placed in a large salon, so by the law of contraries Marshal Joffre seemed to me that day, in his small front parlour, to be out of the environment for which Nature intended him. He is one of those figures of heroic mould which, to be fully appreciated, must be seen with plenty of space about him. The corridors through which such a man passes should be wide and the ceilings high.

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The Marshal told me that he had resolved that the Seine should be the utmost limit which the Germans might reach. The narrative was made more graphic by his taking a tablet of paper and drawing upon it with a pencil the location of the vital points of the attack. Notwithstanding their clear two hundred thousand superiority in numbers, the German troops were first checked, and then routed by the masterly strategy of Marshal Joffre, coupled with the unsurpassed valour of the French officers and the French *poilus*.

To say that long before the war France had not been concerned over the prospect of an invasion by Germany's armies from across neutral territory would be wholly incorrect. But would they come across Switzerland or Belgium? The shortest route to Paris was undoubtedly across a line extending from Verdun through Toul and Epinal. But the enemy knew that it was by no means the easiest, if the possible way. He considered it, therefore, a necessity from the purely military point of view to violate the neutrality of one or the other of these countries, if he were to reach the heart of France.

General Ludendorff, in his book dealing with his part in the great war, has told the world why the German armies had preferred to advance through Belgium.[1] While those armies would be bleeding to death before the fortresses on the Verdun–Belfort line, their right wing would have been attacked from Belgium and beaten by the combined Belgian, French, and English armies. They would also have lost, he added, the industrial region on the lower Rhine. Ultimate defeat would have been certain. The General states that Belgium had long been prepared for the German advance.

"The roads," he says, "had been systematically destroyed and barricaded, showing that a great deal of work had been done beforehand. No such obstacles could be found on the south-west frontier of Belgium. Why had not Belgium taken similar precautions against France?"

And yet, what better proof could be furnished that France

[1] See *Ludendorff's Own Story*, chapter "Liége."

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had never given the slightest cause for Belgium to fear a violation of her territory? On the other hand, the acts of Germany for a number of years preceding the war had indicated a possible programme of this kind on her part. Had not Jules Cambon more than a year before warned his Government at Paris of Germany's preparations?[1] It is indeed a significant fact, and I have it from the lips of Marshal Joffre, that when at one time, considerably antedating the war, France was reviewing Germany's actions with concern, and this very question of a possible necessity of French troops going through Belgium was raised, all such thought was promptly put out of mind by the French Government as something inconceivable. But he considered that all the railroads built by the Germans in that region showed their intention of violating Belgium, and that their platforms at places such as Malmédy were clearly designed for the use of large bodies of troops.

General Joffre had established his plan for the concentration of the French armies two or three years before the war, and this plan was carried out as foreseen when the war came. Long in advance he had felt it would be necessary to have two mobile armies, one for use in the direction of Metz and the other towards the North in case the Germans attacked through Belgium after all. But at the last moment he ordered the French line of sentinels to take up a position ten kilometres behind the frontier, from one end to the other, including Belgium, so as to avoid any possible accusations of a French violation of neutrality. The sentinels remained in this position until war was formally declared by Germany.

The French troops having then taken up their normal positions, it was learned that the German army was near Liége. General Joffre advised the Government in Paris to

[1] Letter dated November 22, 1913, in 1914 French Yellow Book, Document No. 6, mentioned by Raymond Poincaré, *L'Europe Sous les Armes* (Paris, 1926), pp. 329–332. See also Lord Bertie's account of the dinner conversation between Emperor William and M. Davydoff, Chief of Cabinet of M. Kokovtsoff, Russian Minister of Finance in 1913, *The Diary of Lord Bertie*, I, 196–197.

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this effect,[1] and adapted his original plan by sending both his mobile armies north and placing a certain number of divisions so as to face northward against the Germans. But while attempting to turn the French line by passing through Belgium,[2] the Germans still had troops in sufficient numbers to operate on the Toul–Verdun–Epinal front, for they disposed of about forty-five army corps, and the French of only about twenty.

The Germans advanced, attacking Liége but moving on and reaching the heart of Belgium while Liége still held out. Hoping to envelop the French Left, they directed part of their troops towards Antwerp and then came straight on. But the French 5th Army was there, and a group of reserve divisions, to prevent the envelopment.

The battle of Mons–Charleroi followed, and the Anglo-French retreat became inevitable.

General Joffre had meanwhile taken divisions and army corps from his own army, and also an Algerian division, and had concentrated these at Amiens as a new 6th Army under General Maunoury,[3] ready to fall on the German Right under

[1] Gabriel Hanotaux and Lieutenant-Colonel Fabry have pointed out in detail that those who criticize the French strategic measures on the Alsace-Lorraine front overlook relative realities. The German official publications have established that according to the plans of von Schlieffen the manœuvre of the German right was doubled on the left by a manœuvre very nearly as powerful. See *Joffre*, by Gabriel Hanotaux and Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Fabry (Paris, 1921), pp. 46–49. The importance attached by General von Moltke, German Chief of Staff 1906–1914, to his left wing, even to the extent of weakening von Kluck's enveloping movement on the right, is demonstrated by Lieutenant-Colonel Reginald Kann in *Le Plan de Campagne allemand de 1914 et son exécution.*

[2] Marshal Sir Henry Wilson drew attention in his Diary to a note from Joffre received by Sir John French on August 18, in which Joffre expressed the belief that there would be a big German enveloping movement from the North, whereas his staff still thought the main attack would be against Mézières and Verdun. See *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson,* by Major-General Sir C. E. Callwell, Vol. I, Ch. X.

[3] General Maunoury succeeded General Gallieni as Military Governor of Paris and was retired in 1916 totally blind from the consequences of a wound received in the trenches in 1915. He died 1923 and was created posthumously a Marshal of France.

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von Kluck. This had been possible because the railroads were still running for the transportation of troops from Nancy as well as Maubeuge. The French Right at Belfort and Nancy was weakened, but the forces left there held out.

In the very hour of the Allied retreat after the battle of Charleroi, the French Commander-in-Chief, having carefully elaborated his plans, had taken measures to defeat the enemy in a manner as effective as it was surprising—and this at a time when it was too late to draw out of the trap which had been set. In a word, a double programme was being prepared for the unwary von Kluck, of which he little dreamed.

One of the most thrilling parts of the Marshal's narrative that afternoon came when, asking him on what supposition he was making his plans to surprise the German commander, he said to me:

"I was counting upon the enemy making a certain mistake. If he made it, my plans would render success impossible for him. He made it, and his defeat came as the inevitable consequence." [1]

The Marshal's answer was as unemotional in manner as it was laconic. There was no show of exultation or of pride. If one expected a display of vanity in such a man, it would be not to know or understand him. Surely, all history shows no such example of a mistake with such important results. What stock of hopes had an ambitious Emperor, drunk with the anticipations of a victory almost within his grasp, laid in store for a spectacular entry into Paris—if possible, before forty days of the war had gone by? How baleful, to his country, the consequences which flowed from the fountain of such dreams of early conquest! What though a more patient, but less spectacular, course had dictated a surer plan of success by a gradual envelopment of the prey, if it were

[1] The diary entries of Colonel Herbillon, liaison officer between the French G.H.Q. and the Government, have since brought conclusive evidence in confirmation of this, noting developments from day to day, beginning August 29. One entry dated September 6 quotes General Joffre as having said to him: "Here is the opportunity, I expected it farther on, but I profit by it." See *Du Commandant en chef au Gouvernement, Sous le Général Joffre*, Chs. I and II.

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to be at the cost of such chimerical visions? No wonder that von Kluck himself, after the signing of the Armistice had left him free to tell the truth, should have hastened to disclaim the authorship of such a fatal blunder.[1]

While the world knows something of the part played in this victory by the courage of the French soldier, not so many are familiar with the strategy so brilliantly employed to von Kluck's undoing. What was this strategy and what was the "mistake" of von Kluck to which Marshal Joffre had referred?

On August 25 General Joffre had given his first orders for the preparation of the battle, although he did not know on what exact line he could take the offensive. Time for the desired opportunity to ripen was necessary. The Germans must advance enough for the situation to take shape before the Seine was reached. Because, as Marshal Joffre said to me: "I had resolved that they must not get beyond the Seine." They made, however, their mistake permitting him to attack sooner than he had expected. On September 4 he learned from General Gallieni [2] that the Army under General von Kluck had deviated to the south-west. The same day, General Joffre issued the order for the general attack, saying:

"On the day of the 5th all troops shall take up their positions, to begin the attack on the morning of the 6th."

The world knows how completely successful was the dénouement of General Joffre's strategy—how brilliant the attack which came as the culmination of it all.

As a thunderbolt might come out of a clear sky, the new army under General Maunoury, having advanced rapidly southward and being added to General Gallieni's Paris garrison but retaining its quality of mobility, appeared free from the weariness of battle and long marches, and attacked the

[1] In his book *The March on Paris*, von Kluck throws the main responsibility on Lieutenant-Colonel Hentsch, who brought verbal orders from German G.H.Q.

[2] General Gallieni was Minister of War October 1915–March 1916. In 1900 he had organized with General Joffre as his subordinate the defences of Diego Suarez in Madagascar. He died in 1916 and was created posthumously a Marshal of France.

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right wing of von Kluck at the moment when the latter was about to fall with his full might upon the French left flank, General Franchet d'Esperey's[1] Army, and the English Army under Marshal French.

This was the decisive factor in the Marne, although when speaking of the engagement Marshal Joffre did not fail to pay a tribute to all the Generals who had ably done their share in a great concerted action. For von Kluck, to meet the menace, had to withdraw vitally necessary divisions from his own centre and left flank, and during two entire days Maunoury's Army resisted the German attacks in all their strength, thus standing the hardest fighting in the battle.

The close was marked by the heroic stand and triumphant attack of General Foch's 9th Army, a small force improvised by General Joffre to fill a dangerous gap between Franchet d'Esperey's 5th Army and de Langle de Cary's[2] 4th Army. The action at the Marais de St. Gond turned the last tide in favour of France, while to the east the Armies of Dubail[3] and Sarrail[4] and de Castelnau[5] were holding the enemy back in that direction and preventing the arrival of reinforcements.

Von Kluck had to choose between an ignominious defeat or a retreat. The latter alternative prevailed. Despite the masterly order of retreat executed by von Kluck, it was, nevertheless, a defeat as crushing as it had been surprising. He

[1] General (now Marshal) Franchet d'Esperey had taken over the command of the 5th Army from General de Lanrezac after the battle of Guise. He was facing von Bulow's Army at the Marne. As Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies on the Saloniki front he brought the war to an end there.

[2] The 4th Army had been on the Meuse at the opening of hostilities, and at the Marne faced the army of Albrecht of Würtemberg. General de Langle de Cary died in 1927.

[3] In command of the 1st Army (Alsace), now Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour, succeeded Maunoury as Military Governor of Paris.

[4] In command of 3rd Army (Verdun) succeeding Ruffey, and Commander of French troops at Saloniki 1915 (d. 1929).

[5] In command of 2nd Army (Nancy and Grand Couronné) at the First Marne, commanded a group of armies at the Second Marne, later a Deputy, now President of the French National Catholic Federation.

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was enabled to save his army, and the Germans continued the occupation for the following four years of a large portion of French territory; yet the golden opportunity to get to Paris, which for a brief moment had fairly lain in the outstretched hand of Germany, had been for ever lost—and with it the war.

I remember reading in one of the Paris papers a resentful disclaimer that Providence had had anything to do with shaping this epochal victory of the Marne; it was due entirely to the courage and prowess of the French soldier. While one might question whether the cause for which France fought would be lessened in any way by the fact that it had the approval and support of Providence, yet it cannot be denied that never in all the history of battles was strategy more successful, nor the defenders of their soil more brave.

Only once afterwards during those four years—in the early summer of 1918—was the capital in equal danger of being taken. If Fate had gone against France in the First Battle of the Marne, nothing could have averted a repetition of what had happened in the months of 1870 and 1871. Indeed, the consequences, compared with those of the Prussian War, would have been even more disastrous, and an irreparable blow dealt the world. The fortunes of no one battle ever possessed so much of portent to the cause of liberty and of human civilization. On the other hand, had the enemy succeeded in taking Paris in his great drive in 1918, it would have meant only a prolongation of the war until the full force of America's might could have been thrown into the scale.

The outcome of the battle of the Marne, in so far as its immediate military consequence was concerned, was epitomized in the message which Marshal Joffre was enabled to send to his Government, that he had driven the enemy back a distance of sixty kilometres.[1]

Some days after this interesting talk with Marshal Joffre, and shortly before taking my departure from France, I had a desire to go over again, in part, the identical route which I

[1] See Raymond Poincaré, *L'Invasion*, p. 281.

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had taken across this historic field more than four and one-half years before.

Our party consisted of Colonel Fabry,[1] formerly of the staff of Marshal Joffre, Mr. Warrington Dawson, a very capable member of the staff of the Embassy, and my son George, who had accompanied me on my first trip. We were exceedingly fortunate in having with us Colonel Fabry. The Colonel had lost a leg early in the war in the Vosges, when he was leading his famous regiment of Chasseurs—called "blue devils" by the Germans on account of their intrepid character and their dark blue uniforms. His perfect knowledge of every action since the war began was of the greatest advantage in explaining to me, as we progressed over the battlefield, the various positions of the French and British armies on the south and the advancing German armies on the north. Standing on the roadway, a distance of perhaps a mile north of where it crosses the Marne in the environs of the town of Meaux, we alighted from our military car to look over the country in connection with the comprehensive official war maps which he unfolded before us.

Our position was on a high tableland affording an excellent view of what might be considered the very centre of the battlefield. The scene was one of great charm in the early morning of that April day. The budding and leafing out of the trees, the song of the Spring birds, and the balminess of the sunshine, seemed to join in sweet harmony with the revivification of a country so long distraught by war. But the ravages of that Marathonian conflict might have occurred a hundred years before, judging by any visible evidence of its destructiveness in the appearance of the country about us; so rapidly does the healing grace of nature restore her own. A few miles to the south and east of us, just over the brow of the hills, we could see the ancient town of Meaux, with the rising towers of the fine cathedral for which it is noted.

[1] Lieut.-Col. Jean Fabry accompanied Marshal Joffre to the United States in 1917. He has been a Deputy since 1919, French Delegate at the League of Nations 1922–24, Minister of Colonies 1924, he is now Assistant Editor of *L'Intransigeant* and President of the Chamber Army Committee.

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That morning it appeared as some sleepy old town of bygone ages, half awake, reposing in the bed of the valley. It was one of the few towns occupied by the Germans in the early days of the war which had escaped destruction.

From where we were standing, I could have heard the constant roar of the cannon of the contending forces both to the south and to the west. As I followed on the map the changing positions of the French troops, hurrying westward from east of Bar-le-Duc to fill up the gaps where required, and then of other divisions closing in on the following days from the south and the west, succeeded by the stubborn retreat of the German forces, it seemed very much to me as though I were seeing a cinematograph of the battle itself.

We continued our journey, soon entering the valley of the Ourcq. Here among these wooded hills General Franchet d'Esperey had brilliantly followed up the German retreat from the Marne.

Some miles further on, the roadway pierced the forest of Villers-Cotterets. So covered that day were their wooded slopes with wild flowers, that the temptation to stop our car and gather some of them was too great for me to resist. During all my stay in France, I had seldom had such an opportunity to enjoy this pleasure so abundantly afforded by the woods of my own native State. Gathering the flowers with the thought that I would take them back to Mrs. Sharp in Paris that evening, I little knew to what purpose they would so soon be devoted.

At the end of a half-hour pleasantly spent in this beautiful forest, we were again speeding on our way. We had gone but a few miles to the eastward when we saw ahead of us, on our right, a bare field rising high from the roadway, in which had been erected a great number of plain white crosses. Near the entrance had been raised a flagpole, from which was waving the American flag. For a considerable distance before reaching this point we had become painfully aware that another great battle had been waged here, with the highway as its centre. The broken and splintered trees, extending along the road for many rods; the perfect sea of shell-holes

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on each side of us as far as we could see; and even a portion of the forest itself through which we had passed, presenting a scene as though a tornado had swept it—all betokened the fierceness of the struggle. This little cemetery on the rising ground was its sequel. It told more graphically than words of the terrible sacrifice of human life which had been exacted.

Dismounting from the car, our little party silently and reverently entered the enclosure where was buried all that was mortal of seven hundred American heroes. Walking along the pathway at the head of these mounds, placed beside each other so closely as to prevent passage between, I distributed the wild flowers which I had just gathered. On each wooden cross was affixed a small metal tablet on which the soldier's name, rank, and service were given. Many of them had belonged to the famous First Division, which had so gallantly fought in this section in the decisive days of July, following the memorable battle of Château-Thierry.

Shortly before noon we arrived at the ruins of Soissons, a city of the antiquity of Roman days. It was within a mile or two of this place that I had come nearest to reaching the German lines, in my first trip across the fields of the Marne in the early days of the war. I had now made my second trip across the section of France which, as long as the memory of the great war shall endure, will be the scene of the pilgrimage of generations yet to come. On these fields they may well worship at the shrine of patriotism.

In grateful recognition of the supreme sacrifice made by these soldiers of the Marne in a cause which America, too, so splendidly championed, some of our own public-spirited men have already completed plans, supported by popular subscription, for the erection of a noble monument.[1] It was one of my pleasing, as well as one of my last acts before laying down the duties of my mission, to gather about me a

[1] The Marne Memorial Monument was the subject of a speech by Ambassador Hugh C. Wallace, addressed to President Millerand in the presence of ex-President Poincaré at the Palace of the Elysée on May 13, 1921. See *Les Discours de M. l'Ambassadeur Hugh C. Wallace,* collected with a Foreword by Warrington Dawson (Paris, 1921).

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number of prominent American residents of Paris, to arrange for this monument. Mr. Thomas W. Lamont, the eminent banker, had been the prime mover in this enterprise. I had asked M. Ribot to act upon this committee, that there might be linked together in carrying out such a project a common counsel and a common sentiment of representatives of both Republics. At our meeting there was the unanimous wish expressed to associate with this work also the two great marshals of France—Joffre and Foch, without whom there would have been neither the first nor the second victory of the Marne.

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CHAPTER III

GETTING MY BEARINGS

THE Hôtel Crillon, where I had gone at once on reaching Paris, became, shortly after, the stopping place of many of the British statesmen whose presence was necessary in the French capital. I saw in his favourite corner in the dining-room the leonine head of Lloyd George, and about him in earnest conversation his conferees. Early in my stay I also met there Lord Murray of Elibank, with whom I became most pleasantly acquainted. He had come over on a sad mission, that of finding, if possible, the last resting place of his young son, who early in the struggle had given up his life in the cause for which so many other of his brave young compatriots made the supreme sacrifice. But in such affliction, this father was only one of the many who, during those days, came to Paris upon similar sad errands.

Later still came Colonel House, the silent and sagacious friend of President Wilson, of whom a newspaper reporter, being disappointed on one occasion with the result of an interview, exclaimed, "Beside Colonel House, the Sphinx is like a chattering old maid at a pink tea." To have kept tab upon all who, in those early days, were admitted to his rooms might have furnished an index, like the proverbial straw, to know which way the wind was blowing. The genial manager of the hotel looked upon me as a sort of harbinger of that American patronage which came to his hostelry in such volume later in the war.

One of the impressions which had most vividly lingered in my mind, from former experience in this gay French capital, was that the pedestrian had little business on the thoroughfares of that city, so little were his rights respected by the cabman. Such impressions now demanded a revision. The

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presence of few passers-by and the dearth of vehicles upon the once thronged streets might well have convinced a stranger that the entire population had gone away on a holiday.

To add to this Sunday-like appearance in the business quarter of the city, I observed that the blinds were often drawn tightly down over the big store windows. In many such instances, one had but to look at the sign above to learn the reason. They bore the names of German firms which, for many years preceding the war, had done a profitable business in Paris. The members of some of these were lucky enough to be able to depart hastily for the Fatherland during the hours immediately preceding the formal declaration of war; others less fortunate were already spending their days in some of the civilian *interné* camps, there to stay till the end of the hostilities. During a period of more than two years thereafter, it became a part of my accepted duty to look after the interests of this latter class, as I shall relate in another chapter.[1]

At the end of our first week in Paris, my young son, during one of our walks, turning to me said, "Dad, I have not seen a young man anywhere. What has become of them?" His observation was all too true. Within a brief period of one month, all those capable of bearing arms had hurried away to the defence of their country. Morning after morning I observed, with mingled feelings of admiration and sadness, a group of boys lacking many months of being out of their teens, undergoing military training in the wood just off avenue Gabriel, near my hotel. On the other side of the Champs-Elysées a similar scene could be witnessed. An officer in charge was giving them their first instruction in war. Bright-faced rollicking boys they were, full of animation and good fellowship. At the end of a few weeks the personnel of these groups was completely changed and other boys were there to take their places. Each succeeding group went through the same manœuvres. How often I wondered during the following months as to what Fate had dealt out to

[1] See Chapter V, "Prison Camps."

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these splendid young boys of France—men as yet only in the making.

The great metropolis had indeed suddenly become a city of women. There was scarcely a vocation which was not all but pre-empted by them, even to the most common kind of heavy, manual labour. By them, too, was borne, during all the months to follow, an inconceivably heavy burden of sorrow. A pathetic sight, not uncommonly witnessed by me, was that of weeping women, who, standing in the doorways of their little shops, or in the centre of a group of sympathizing friends, had just received news of the death of loved ones at the front. And as the war continued I was witness to such scenes in every portion of France. Deepest mourning everywhere characterized their dress.

In the presence of the overshadowing peril which menaced the nation, soon nothing became strange or seemed unusual: the human heart can receive but so much emotion, whether joy or sorrow. Except for the constant sense of depression which came with the uncertainty of each day's news from the front, there was a surprising degree of normality among the people who remained in Paris. Though necessarily modified in many ways by the condition of a war whose battle-line was for four years less than fifty miles away, the daily routine of life was maintained. In those early days of trial, the open doors of the churches furnished an ingress for many an aching heart. Here within these sanctuaries alone was to be found that solace which not only the power of faith itself could give, but which the presence of others kneeling beside them, likewise sorely afflicted, could afford. Misery sought company. Though the two American churches, on account of the thinning out of my compatriots, were less frequented, they still furnished centres from which radiated an atmosphere of helpfulness and good cheer for those who so sorely needed them.

My own church was that of the rue de Berri. Here, during the first critical years of the war, Doctor Caspar W. Hiatt, as Pastor, proved himself a tower of strength. He was a native of Cleveland, and had preached in our own church at

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Elyria. The rue de Berri congregation made up in faithfulness what it lacked in numbers, and its membership played no small part in the organized efforts in which all Americans contributed so much of their energy and means. After our own entrance into the war, under the pastorate of Dr. Chauncey Goodrich, beloved of his congregation, I saw every available seat of the church occupied Sunday after Sunday by American boys in khaki.

On the first Sunday after my arrival, accompanied by Mr. Whitney Warren, who spent much of his time in Paris, I visited the church of St. Sulpice, where Widor presided at the organ. Mr. Warren, knowing well this distinguished musician, wished me to meet him. In a manner most polite and affable, I was invited to take a seat by him at the great organ, high above the worshippers. On that very day and hour when its sweet tones were filling the vaulted structure with their inspiring music, the momentous decision of the Marne was being fought by the opposing armies of approximately two million men so near to Paris that in a quiet moment the sound of the cannon could be distinctly heard. But during the entire war, such strange contrarieties seemed to be rather the normal condition of things than otherwise.

Though outwardly there was a certain calm preserved among the people, this had not prevented the greatest precautions from being taken against the consequences of what would assuredly happen if the Germans succeeded in entering the city. The great banks were not the only institutions which had removed their treasures to distant points of safety. There were other treasures in Paris more precious than gold.

Until a few weeks before, the roof of the Palace of the Louvre had sheltered the most famous collection of art in the world. Mindful of the lessons taught by the invading conquerors of other times, those responsible for the safety of this treasure must have viewed with the greatest alarm the oncoming rush of the German armies. If my friend Whitney Warren, to whom I have just alluded, was fond of music, he was by profession a devotee of art. From the galleries of the Louvre he drew his inspiration. Nothing

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would do but that I must give my consent to be formally received by the officials of that institution. My intercession as the representative of a powerful neutral might, in an emergency, save it from bombardment.

The hour of my visit having been arranged, I was received in the courtyard of the Louvre with much politeness and no little ceremony by a body of cultured men not less than twenty in number, to whose guardianship these treasures had been committed. Always of greatest interest to the visitor, the scenes before me as I entered were made doubly so now. Thousands of bags of sand or earth had been piled in front of all the windows. Wooden frames or fences had been built around the immovable treasures and filled with earth. The two main doors were piled about fifteen feet high with sacks of earth. The Venus of Milo, the Monna Lisa, and a few other of the most valuable of the sculptures and pictures, had been removed to cities further from the enemy lines, while many had been taken down to vaults where there were no windows. Great bare places here and there on the walls, where once famous paintings had hung, gave a feeling of depression, a sense of some impending loss that could never be replaced.

Within a month after the declaration of war, more than one million Parisians had left the city—that is, one out of every three inhabitants had already gone to other points in France. Many thousands of them did not return until the close of the war. At the Hôtel Crillon, the manager informed me that every patron had left his place. In fact, for a time I found it much more convenient to dine at the Restaurant Larue, just across from the Madeleine, the staff of domestics at the hotel, called to the front, having dwindled to such a number as to cause serious doubts as to its ability to remain open for business.

It was while taking lunch at this restaurant a few days after my arrival that I first met, by chance, M. Denys Cochin. Like myself, he had found the normal way of living quite out of the question. This gentleman, for many years a distinguished member of the Chamber of Deputies, and after-

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wards a Cabinet Minister, being told that the new American Ambassador was in the room, came over to my table and, in a most cordial manner, introduced himself. He was remaining, for a time, in Paris before joining his Parliamentary colleagues at Bordeaux. Our acquaintance, begun that day under such unusual conditions, ripened into a warm friendship. Later in the war, when he became Minister of the Blockade in the Briand Cabinet,[1] I had important conferences with him upon subjects in which my Government was especially interested. He is a man of great wealth, and an ardent Catholic.

Upon his entrance into the Cabinet in 1915 he told me of an incident which well illustrates the bond of union which, in the face of a common danger to the country, had so completely obliterated all factions in France, whether of a political or a religious character. Perhaps one of the most uncompromising anti-clericals in French public life had been M. Emile Combes.[2] A student of modern European history must ever associate his name with the anti-clerical activities begun in the Ministry of Waldeck-Rousseau. When the Viviani War Cabinet had gone out of power and M. Briand had been asked to form a new one, M. Combes was sounded as to his willingness to accept the appointment as one of the Ministers of State. He replied by saying: "I will accept such a position in your Cabinet only upon the condition that M. Cochin likewise consents to be a member."

Upon his return late in 1915 from Athens, where he had been sent on an important mission, M. Cochin told me of an interesting episode bearing on the war, brought out on the

[1] Minister of State without portfolio in the Briand 1915–1916 Cabinet; Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Blockade) in the Ribot Cabinet, March 20 to August 19, 1917. He died in 1921.

[2] Emile Combes succeeded M. Waldeck-Rousseau as President of the Council and Minister of the Interior, 1902–1905, at the period of the strong anti-clerical movement in France which led to the passage of the law for the separation of Church and State in France on Dec. 9, 1905, under the Rouvier Cabinet, after M. Combes himself had been overthrown. Minister of State without Portfolio in the Briand 1915–1916 Cabinet. He died in 1921.

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occasion of a dinner given to him by King Constantine and Queen Sophia, the sister of Emperor William. With great earnestness and show of feeling, the Queen told him that it was her uncle, the late King Edward, who had caused the war.[1] His conduct, she said, toward Germany long before its beginning had been such as greatly to embitter the relations between the two countries. This statement revealed the extent of her prejudices.

Many months after this acquaintance with M. Cochin, it became my unhappy duty to write to him a letter expressing my deep sympathy over the loss of a second son in battle, both falling in the cause of their country.[2] Acknowledging my message, after having feelingly thanked me for my sympathy, he wrote: "My son has sacrificed his life, dear to his parents, precious to all those who knew him. May so much heroism—and so many tears—hasten the triumph of the most just of causes." A Spartan father!

To return to the period immediately following my arrival in Paris. I continued indefatigably my endeavour to reach as complete an understanding as possible of the people among whom I had come, taking long walks in all quarters of the capital. I also sought to extend my knowledge of provincial France, and I prolonged one trip I had taken to Havre as far as England, a country which I particularly wished to show to my son.

[1] "Various opinions have been expressed about Constantine. I must say that in his relations with the officers of the mission" (*i.e.* the French Military Mission to Greece headed by General de Villaret which left Athens immediately upon the declaration of war in August, 1914) "the King always endeavoured to show sympathy, and we never had any occasion to complain about him or of the Royal family in our official or social relations with them. . . . The Queen alone had some difficulty in concealing her antipathy for the French uniform." Colonel Herbillon, *Du Commandant en chef au Gouvernement, Sous le Général Joffre*, Ch. I.

[2] Jacques in 1915 and Augustin in 1916. Augustin Cochin was the author of several works to which much attention is being paid by critics in France to-day, tending to deny the spontaneous character of revolutions and to stress the importance of regional clubs. See notably *Les Sociétés de pensée et la Démocratie, La Révolution et la Libre Pensée*, and *Les Sociétés de pensée et la Révolution*.

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During those first weeks in Paris, I experienced a feeling as if, from the very need for mutual protection and counsel, the barriers of social formalities had been swept away. Those who remained in the city seemed to have a common appreciation of what German occupation would mean. But never was there a more complete abandonment of concern for mere self than was shown by everyone. While, naturally, the residents in Paris of neutral nationality had less of personal concern in such a fate, yet it is doubtful if a thought of this character occurred to many of them. This was particularly true of the Americans. To them, in this her hour of peril, because of the very privileges and associations which they had so long enjoyed, it seemed as though the menace to Paris were a personal one. The importance of our country gave all its citizens abroad such prestige as to invite their confidence and create appeals for sympathy and protection. This was true throughout France, destined to become the battleground of the war. The enemy Powers had early placed their interests in the care of the American Government. This fact, very naturally, threw about every American citizen a mantle of protection, except from an actual bombardment of the city.

It was not surprising that my first acquaintances were largely among the American residents of Paris. Their number was now very much reduced and confined to those who, for various reasons, chiefly of business or health, had chosen to remain, and, with Mr. Britling, set about "seeing it through." Frequent gatherings, characterized by great earnestness of purpose, were held in these first days of danger by members of the American colony. The meetings had mainly for their object the affording of relief to the distressed. The numbers of these were rapidly increasing, as the needs of hospital work and the caring for refugees from Belgium and the invaded portions of France were brought to the very doors of Paris. It will be one of the lasting glories of France that, though distressed and harassed herself on a great battle front, compelled to defend every foot of her soil against a powerful and persistent enemy, she nevertheless became the asylum, not

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only for the fleeing refugees of smaller countries, but even for their Governments and Sovereigns as well—a compassionate Niobe of Allied nations in whose bosom their children, in danger and distress, sought solace.

From the initiative of these first meetings, the foundations of many relief organizations were laid. Their humanitarian work will ever endure as one of the most remarkable phases of a remarkable war. While it is true that many of these were later absorbed by the American Red Cross, yet the spirit of doing good and alleviating suffering among their fellow-men had been born, and was to continue to grow, no matter under what particular name its activities were to be exerted. In subsequent pages something of the character of this work, as well as of its scope and influence, will be described. But in passing, it is well to note that it had its inception at the time the danger was nearest. There was no faltering and no turning back in effort.

During the years which followed, I was enabled to look back to these meetings, at which the best representatives of the American colony were frequently gathered, as the time at which I had first formed some of my most pleasant acquaintances. Although I had not as yet assumed charge of my post, and, therefore, my presence did not partake of an official character, yet I was always most cordially welcomed. A majority of those who came had been residents of Paris for many years, and not only their familiarity with the language, but their acquaintance with Government officials, gave to their work the greatest efficiency. Bankers, professional men and business men predominated in this circle of earnest-minded men—usually comprising a score or more in number at a session. The names of Herman Harjes, as President, Judge Walter Berry, Charles Carroll, Henry Cachard, Doctor S. N. Watson, George Munroe, Herbert Howland, James Barbour, James Hazen Hyde, Ridgway Knight, J. Mark Baldwin, Dr. Lines, Dr. Magnin and others will ever be associated with the direction of those early endeavours. Back of them, as indeed back of every helpful movement having the accomplishment of good as its object, were the wise

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counsel and open purse of Edward Tuck, an American whose great wealth and long residence abroad never impaired his patriotic love for his native country.

As a young man, Mr. Tuck had had an interesting experience in the consular service at Paris, under the administration of Lincoln and during the missions of William L. Dayton and John Bigelow as American Ministers to France. Associated with him in official work was John Hay, who for a brief time was *Chargé d'Affaires* of the American Legation.

Among my most enjoyable experiences during my residence in Paris were the occasional week-end visits which, upon invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Tuck, I made to their beautiful château, "Vert-Mont," distant some twenty or more kilometres from Paris, on the road to St. Germain. Originally a part of Napoleon's estate of Malmaison,[1] and just across from the road in which is located the château where Empress Josephine lived, the grounds in all their charm and beauty of design were a veritable Elysium. From my front windows in the suite of rooms always assigned to members of my family, or to me, I could look across the wooded valley extending over beyond the winding Seine to the spires of the churches of St. Germain. And then, stretching far to the north, I could see nearly the entire length of the beautiful elevated promenade which skirts its famous wooded park. To the south, over the tops of the forests in the distance, was an equally charming scene featured in its centre by the ruins of the lofty arches of the aqueduct built in the time of Louis XIV for the purpose of supplying water to Versailles. Such brief sojourns amid such an entrancing environment afforded a most welcome respite and diversion from my labours at the Chancery.

[1] The "Vert-Mont" château and park have since been restored by testament to the French State by the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Tuck, so that the Malmaison estate will once again exist in its integrity. Mr. and Mrs. Tuck have furthermore made to the French nation veritably princely gifts of antique furniture and objects of art whose historic interest is often as great as their intrinsic value. Mr. Tuck was decorated with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour in 1929. Mrs. Tuck, who died in 1928, had been a *Chevalier* of the Legion since 1917 and an officer since 1921.

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The energy displayed in carrying out the plans formulated for the varied kinds of relief work undertaken was typically American. Its directness was prophetic of not only the work of the Red Cross, but of the great part which we were finally to play in the war itself. Quite as much with a desire to show my goodwill to my compatriots as to be of all possible service in the great humanitarian work which they had inaugurated, I continued to attend their meetings until the American Red Cross had been fully organized and had taken over their many forms of relief. Complete written reports of the work accomplished were furnished me by the organization. Of these it was my pleasure from time to time to submit a summary to Washington, with personal comments thereon. At the very inception of this organization, the State Department gave it semi-official recognition on the condition that its activities should be under the general supervision of the American Ambassador. It became, in deed, as it was in name, the American Relief Clearing House.

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CHAPTER IV

PRESENTING MY LETTER OF CREDENCE

UNFORTUNATELY, even before entering upon my official duties, I had to engage in another task which was not so agreeable. I must secure an Embassy residence. Just before I had left Washington, Secretary Bryan had enjoined upon me the desirability of early securing such a residence. Alas! It was a request more easily made than complied with. Soon after my arrival in Paris, I learned that it would be impossible to secure the residence of my three predecessors,[1] who had successively occupied it for six years. It was, in fact, to be turned over to the American Relief Clearing House as a headquarters for their work.

In reporting to the Secretary of State upon the situation, I wrote: "It was indeed fortunate that, with the exception of my eldest son, none of the members of my family accompanied me to Paris, as at first sight it seemed quite impossible for me to get anything like a suitable place for an Embassy. Only the fact that the very unusual conditions brought on by the war had caused many people of wealth to leave the city enabled me finally to be successful in my search. In the meantime, I had actually looked at more than forty residences, both inside and out, engaging the services of several real estate agents to help me in the quest."

My choice was arrived at by a process of elimination, until there remained but four suitable residences from which to select. One of these was the beautiful home of Madame Francis de Croisset, located on the Place des Etats-Unis. This later became the residence of President and Mrs. Wilson upon their return to the Peace Conference; a mansion with a stately staircase and a grand salon of beautiful design and

[1] No. 5 rue François Ier.

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splendid proportions. Up this staircase trod the men who made history at the Paris Conference. Though the Hôtel Crillon was the stopping-place for the members of the American Commission with its numerous advisers, yet it was under this roof that the three big men of the Conference—Clemenceau, Lloyd George and President Wilson—had their rendezvous.

I was sentimentally inclined to look with favour upon this location. The charming little park itself had been named in honour of the United States from the fact that nearly forty years before the Hon. Levi P. Morton, then United States Minister to France, had located his Legation facing it. Walking under the shade of its handsome trees, their high tops filled with the song birds of earliest Spring, I sometimes found a brief respite from my cares and duties at the Chancery but a block away.

The hope of securing one of the other residences, in this process of elimination, was very hard for me to abandon. Of attractive appearance and of recent construction, it was in a number of respects admirably adapted for the purpose. But the lady who owned it, a Belgian Countess—though very desirous of renting it to the American Ambassador—yet insisted on reserving her own private suite of rooms where she might continue to reside at her pleasure. I gained nothing by the explanation that, aside from being unable so to limit the accommodation required for a family of five children, with a retinue of servants, I could not well share with her the use of the *ascenseur*, the service of the *concierge*, etc. She was unyielding, and I had to dismiss that prospect from my mind. I could not blame her, poor lady, for she had had the sad experience, like so many others, of having her splendid property in Belgium levelled to the ground by the Germans. She now wished to live under her own roof.

If it had been a matter of mere personal comfort to consider, without reference to the official character which such a residence must necessarily have, and without concern for the varied demands which, as such, it would be called upon to satisfy, the problem would have been simpler. Some of

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the places inspected had gardens, others had not; some were too small, others lacked reception rooms of adequate size for Embassy purposes. But the places shown me differed little more in variety than did the character of their proprietors. One was a rich Brazilian, the value of whose securities at home the war had greatly imperilled. He must leave Paris at once. His new house, exquisitely furnished and decorated, was offered to me at a very low price; but it was only half large enough, and no other advantages could atone for such a need.

In accomplishing this unenviable task of finding a home, I shall always gratefully remember the kindness of the late Mrs. Thackara, wife of Mr. Alexander M. Thackara,[1] our most efficient Consul-General at Paris. As Mrs. Sharp had not yet arrived, I availed myself of the knowledge and good judgment of Mrs. Thackara, who, in several instances, accompanied me to the residences which I inspected. It was always a deep personal regret to me that her untimely death prevented her from ever being a guest at a home which she had so generously sought to help me secure. The daughter of General William T. Sherman, and possessing his talents and simplicity of manner, she was beloved by everybody who knew her. Notwithstanding the time and energy which she spent in war relief work—particularly devoted to the cause of Serbia[2]—there still seemed always time left for serving her friends. She gave a true example of a religion put into practice in her everyday doings.

Envious visions came to my mind when I thought of the superb garden of the Austrian Embassy which had been

[1] Alexander Montgomery Thackara, graduate U.S. Naval Academy, served U.S.N. 1869–82, U.S. Consul at Havre, Consul-General at Berlin 1905–1913. Consul-General at Paris 1913–1925.

[2] Mrs. Thackara, who died in 1915 exhausted by her war work, founded with Warrington Dawson, in October, 1914, the *Urgent Fund for Serbian Wounded*, under the patronage of M. Milenko R. Vesnitch, Serbian Minister to France, and with the support of an American committee in Paris. It was the first organized work for the relief of heroic Serbia. The two founders were decorated by King Peter with the order of the Serbian Red Cross.

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placed under my protecting care by that Government. The German Embassy, likewise then under my charge, is a stately mansion of historic interest; while the homes of my Russian and Italian colleagues are also places of great dignity. All are owned and maintained by their Governments.

The British Embassy is in a class by itself. The others which I have mentioned are across the Seine, while this one, with its beautiful garden extending clear through from the Faubourg St. Honoré to the wooded avenue Gabriel, is near the Elysée Palace, the residence of the President of the Republic. An interesting story was told me by the late Lord Bertie of Thame,[1] then British Ambassador, on the occasion of my first Christmas Day in Paris. He made a call in return for one which I had made on him at the time of presenting my letter of credence in Bordeaux. Sitting at my fireside that afternoon in the large salon of my apartments at the Hôtel Crillon, my distinguished colleague, then the Dean of the diplomatic corps—which distinction, upon his resignation later, was to come to me—unbent during that hour the rather severe dignity for which he was noted, notwithstanding his propensity for telling humorous stories. Behind him he had fifty years of diplomatic service to his credit.

After telling me that his son could boast of the fact that his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had been Ambassadors to France,[2] he informed me that, just a hundred years before, the British Government had acquired from the sister of Napoleon, Princess Pauline Borghese, for Embassy purposes,[3] the residence which he then occupied. Owing to

[1] Sir Francis Bertie, created Lord Bertie of Thame, British Ambassador to France 1905–1918, died in London, 1919. He is frequently and very favourably mentioned in M. Raymond Poincaré's series of Memoirs dealing with the period preceding the war and the war itself.

[2] Lord Bertie had married Lady Feodorowna Wellesley, daughter of the Earl of Cowley and grand-daughter of Baron Cowley, each of whom had been British Ambassador to France, like Baron Cowley's brother, the Duke of Wellington, and a direct ancestor in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Lord Norreys, whose tomb is in Westminster Abbey.

[3] The Hôtel de Charost, built in 1720 by the architect Mazin for the Duc de Béthune-Charost, whose grandson sold it in 1803 to Pauline Bonaparte, then the widow of General Leclerc, for Frs. 400,000. M. F. Cadet

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the pressing needs of the Princess, it was purchased by the Duke of Wellington for the sum of £26,500. Even at that low price, Lord Bertie told me that his Government, impoverished by the country's long years of war, required a year in which to complete its payment.

The extent of this bargain may be realized when it is stated that the gold plate alone, which went with the house, was worth more than the entire price paid. I have seen there single articles of furniture of the Napoleonic period, which were included in the sale, that had in themselves a princely value. The decorations and rare tapestries in the room of the Princess, just as she left it, are still pointed out to guests at the British Embassy. The property, for which an equivalent of about $130,000 was paid a hundred years ago, would now probably be worth twenty times that amount. It has been the home of every British Ambassador from that time down to the present. In addition to his residence, he also receives from his Government a salary three times greater than that paid to the American Ambassador at Paris.

Within a period of thirty years there have been nine different residences for the American diplomatic representatives to France. These have been widely located in different parts of the city, with varying degrees of fitness for the purpose. A new Ambassador was fortunate indeed if he could step into the house which had been occupied by his predecessor. In most cases he simply had to take what he could find in the market. In my own case, what seemed to be a misfortune turned out to be a veritable boon.

After my patience had been nearly exhausted in the search for a suitable home, the beautiful modern residence of M. Jean Bartholoni on Avenue d'Eylau,[1] carrying with it its

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de Gassicourt, Librarian of the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, has remarked: "This purchase did not come as a surprise, for Pauline was believed to have brought back a large fortune from Santo Domingo. Her share in the loot was estimated at anywhere from Frs. 7,000,000 to Frs. 20,000,000." See *L'Hôtel de l'Ambassade d'Angleterre*, in *Ambassades et Consulats*, September, 1929.

[1] No. 14 avenue d'Eylau, just off the Place du Trocadéro, built to serve as Siamese Legation and as residence for the King of Siam on his visits to Paris.

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complement of rare objects of art and exquisite furnishings, was offered to me at a price made moderate by the exigencies of war. With its beautiful garden, and its entire adaptability for the purposes of an Embassy residence, it became, during the following four years, an open house for many Americans. They came either for hospitality, or for the discussion with Mrs. Sharp of a great variety of relief projects. Its library—our Red Room—was the scene of a number of notable conferences growing out of America's entrance into the war. Indeed, I recall the names of not more than one or two, among those who frequently guided the destinies of the Allied cause, whom I did not have at one time or another as a guest or caller in this room. What reflections of these world figures were there cast from the great mirror above the fireplace! Before it had passed Presidents, Premiers, Princes, Diplomats, Generals, and those prominent in civil life. Its very location in a secluded corner of the Embassy, overlooking the garden, coupled with the need of secrecy, had invited within its walls those confidences which could never be revealed except at the sacrifice of good faith.

Upon resigning my mission, I was able to secure the Embassy for the Hon. Hugh C. Wallace,[1] my friend and successor, who is making such a creditable record in his high position.

A distinguished American, who had been asked to accept the head of a very important diplomatic mission abroad, had known me well in years past, and came to Paris to get my advice before making his decision. He desired to know at first hand approximately what it would cost him to maintain such a position. Sitting in my library that evening, he gave me with great frankness an outline of his financial condition. From his story it was plainly not a question at all as to whether he could maintain his mission within his income,

[1] Hugh Campbell Wallace, Receiver of Public Moneys for Utah 1885–87, took a prominent part in National Campaigns of 1892, 1912, and 1916. American Ambassador to France April, 1919–July, 1921. He later secured as his Embassy residence and eventually bought the fine building owned by the Radziwill family, 5 Place d'Iéna. The present American Embassy, 2 avenue d'Iéna, is the property of the American Government.

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adding to it his salary, but rather how much of his principal he would be called upon to sacrifice. And yet, before me was a man, by native ability, character, and attainments highly qualified for the position which had been offered him, who must first prudently figure out whether his financial means would enable him to accept it without imperilling his modest fortune. To the credit of my American colleagues in Europe, all of whom at one time or another I met in Paris during my mission, I may say that there was not one of whom I had heard the slightest criticism as to his extravagance of living or un-Americanism of manner.

I could tell the same story of our consuls in France. Capable, energetic, and of long experience, these faithful officials find it a difficult matter to make both ends meet on the salaries which they receive from our Government. Though they are required to be men of unusual capacity, and are called upon to discharge duties of the highest importance in furthering our commerce abroad, there is not one of them that could not at home earn and receive from two to three times the salary which attaches to his office. Only fidelity to duty on the part of most of these men keeps them from resigning their positions.

A touch of human interest attaches to a pathetic letter which I received one day from the aged widow of one of the responsible clerks—in fact the only clerk for many years—of the Embassy in Paris, shortly after his death. In her letter she wrote: "I called at the Embassy some time ago and heard with great regret that you were ill. Since then, I have been up again thinking I should surely see you and be able to tell you how very kind the Chamber of Commerce are to me. They intend allowing me three hundred francs a month for nine years—it is so good of them to have taken so much trouble about me, and you must know how very grateful I am to them and also to you for all your great goodness to my husband and myself." This message came from the widow of one who for more than thirty-five years had received from our Government an annual salary of but twelve hundred dollars. His chief concern when I called to see him during

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his last illness, which he bore so patiently, was lest his work at the office might suffer from his absence.

A more progressive—a more just, even if not generous—policy must be obtained. From having an unusual opportunity also to know of the pecuniary sacrifices which all those of lower rank in our diplomatic service—consuls, secretaries, and clerks—are called upon to make through grossly inadequate compensation, this duty of correcting the inequalities to which I have referred—and I now speak only of salary compensation—should not stop at the top. I am sure that with such a reform inaugurated, there would be fewer complaints, no matter how ill-founded, that there are too many snobs in our diplomatic service—men who only by reason of the possession of large means could aspire to such places.[1]

I have before mentioned the fact that coincident with my arrival in Paris, the third of September, the French Government had left for Bordeaux where the capital of the nation was for a time to be. During succeeding months, opponents of the Government seized upon this action as a cause for criticism. The fact, however, that events turned out in such a way as to make its going unnecessary certainly does not justify such criticism. That there was a real danger of the occupation of Paris by the enemy at the moment of its leaving was unquestioned. What criticism might not have been more justly levelled at the Government, had it not left the capital and the enemy had succeeded in taking it![2]

In an address made at the hall of the French Geographical

[1] Since the above was written by Mr. Sharp, Congress has appropriated the sums needed for the purchase of Embassies and Legations in a number of capitals; while the entire scale of salaries for diplomatic officers under the rank of Minister and for Consular officers has been reorganized, with increases and pensions. The views expressed by Mr. Sharp are similar to those of his colleague in London. (See *The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page*, by Burton J. Hendrick, Vol. I, Chapter VIII, and Vol. III, Chapter III.)

[2] Colonel Herbillon, who was liaison officer between the French G.H.Q. and the Government, gives contemporaneous evidence of the decision to evacuate Paris, in the records from his day-to-day note-book published under the title *Du Commandant en chef au Gouvernement*, Chs. II and III. He chronicled on August 30, 1914, that General Joffre had instructed him to take word to Paris that the city must be evacuated; this decision, he said,

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Society in January, 1919, interesting details of the situation, and also of the preparation of the Marne by General Joffre, were given by M. Alexandre Millerand,[1] who succeeded M. Messimy as Minister of War when the Viviani Cabinet was partially reformed on August 26, 1914, just before the battle of the Marne. He remained in power for more than a year. It was he who collaborated with General Joffre in the gigantic task of reorganizing the entire French system for military supplies on the scale demanded by new conditions of war, and this not only under the enemy's fire but with a large section of French territory occupied.[2]

I was now to have the unique experience, among many others which the war had made so common, of being the first American Ambassador to present his letter of credence to the head of the Government of France at a place other than Paris. The period following my arrival had become one of increasing embarrassment to me. It had been understood, at the time of my departure for France, that I was not to assume immediate charge of the mission,[3] as the exigencies of the unusual situation seemed to dictate a deviation from the custom of the outgoing representative leaving either before or upon the arrival of his successor. But the time had now come when

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was received with equanimity, as the opinion concerning the advisability of the measure was undivided in the councils of the Government.

This momentous resolve had been reached with no idea of abandoning Paris to the enemy, but of allowing to General Joffre the complete liberty of action needed to apply his plans for the great defensive battle; his purpose was to avoid a capitulation which might have been imposed if the Government with all its archives had been besieged in Paris. President Poincaré has written an account of the debates in the Councils of Government. See *L'Invasion*, pp. 208 and 215–216.

[1] Minister of Commerce and Industry in the famous Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet 1899–1902, Minister of War in the Viviani War Cabinet August 26, 1914–Oct 28, 1915, President of the French Republic August 1920–June 1924, now a Senator.

[2] The text of M. Millerand's address appeared under the title *Le Général Joffre* in *La Revue Hebdomadaire* of Feb. 15, 1919.

[3] In a letter to President Wilson dated Aug. 3, 1916, Colonel House recalled the facts that Mr. Sharp had been both appointed and confirmed as Ambassador to France prior to the declaration of the World War. See *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. II, Ch. XII.

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the equivocal position in which circumstances had placed me must end.

The delay in taking over the mission, however, had not been without its compensations; I had been enabled to acquaint myself thoroughly with a many-angled situation. From the day of the assumption of my duties, this knowledge stood me in good stead. In his first letter to me, upon my taking over the mission, President Wilson expressed satisfaction at the way in which I had behaved "in very trying circumstances"—to use his language—expressing at the same time his greatest confidence in my success. To the last day of my stewardship of the high office to which he had appointed me, that confidence was so often manifested toward me as to make it a veritable tower of strength in times when assurance of such support was most needed. Indeed, it was that kind of support and loyalty, I take it, which General Pershing, long after the great conflict had ended, so feelingly told me the President had always given him in sustaining his acts.

On the night of the first of December, accompanied by my son, I left for Bordeaux, where we arrived on the following morning at a very early hour. Mr. Garrett,[1] Special Agent of the American Embassy, kindly opened his house to us.

As I had made the long journey for the sole purpose of presenting my letter of credence, naturally every other thing connected with my trip became merely incidental. What I should say in my address to the President of the French Republic was a question which, in ordinary times, could have been easily answered. But this was not an ordinary time; it was a time when every word spoken by America's representative would be given the greatest weight, and would be most closely scrutinized. America was the foremost neutral nation of all the Powers. Our Government was not only

[1] John W. Garrett, Minister to Venezuela 1910–11, Argentine 1911–14, Special Agent of the State Department to assist the American Ambassador in Paris 1914–17, Representative in Bordeaux Sept. 3–Dec. 9, 1914, Minister to the Netherlands 1917–19. Ambassador to Italy since 1929. See also Chapter V, "Prison Camps."

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pledged to neutrality, but had accepted the obligation of looking after the interests of all the Central Powers who had entrusted them to our care. In a most formal manner, it had in fact enjoined the observance of the strictest neutrality on the part of all American citizens at home or abroad.

From the very beginning of the war, official notices proclaiming and enjoining such neutrality had been posted upon our bulletin board at the Chancery; even those who ran might read. And yet more was expected from me than the expression of mere platitudes which, in ordinary times, would create about as much interest as an exchange of observations on the weather. My dilemma was a real one.

The formal instructions issued by the Department of State to all our diplomatic representatives require that the address accompanying the presentation of letters of credence shall be written and spoken in English. A copy of this address must be furnished to the Minister for Foreign Affairs after notice has been received of the granting of an audience, in order that a suitable reply may be prepared. Having complied with this part of the instructions, I arranged an appointment for the ceremony through M. William Martin, *Introducteur des Ambassadeurs* and *Chef du Protocole*.[1] It was my initiation into the mysteries of that ceremonial custom to which every diplomatic representative must respectfully bow. I am sure no arbiter of such power wielded his authority in a more gracious and accommodating, but withal effective, manner than did this Minister of the Protocol. His name, as well as his appearance, betoken the fact that he is of English descent, though his ancestry dates more than a century back, to the Napoleonic period.

In the years following this, our first acquaintance, I found in him a veritable Mentor when it came to either arranging social functions at the Embassy or conforming to the seemingly arbitrary, but nevertheless necessary, rules of the Protocol.

[1] M. William Martin has since served as French Minister to Portugal. His brother, Colonel James Martin, served with distinction throughout the war. He was succeeded as Chief of the Protocol by M. Pierre Becq de Fouquières, brother of M. André de Fouquières.

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In almost every act of official decorum, his opinion was asked as a matter of course; even if a question came up as to the proper placing of any official guests at the Embassy table, his ruling was my law. In the case of elaborate State dinners, where were gathered every sort of high personage, from Kings down to the diplomatic representatives of the most humble Powers, this task, notwithstanding the guidance of certain fixed rules, must have been not without its difficulties. The relation of his office to the Elysée Palace was such as to make it always necessary for me to arrange through him any appointments which I desired to make with the President. It was invariably through this Minister that my fellow Americans were given such audience at my request. The existing rules of the Protocol relating to official precedence were established more than a hundred years ago, at the Congress of Vienna, at a time when elaborate ceremonial custom prevailed in the courts of Europe. The Governments of both France and the United States have not deemed it wise to discard their observance.

It was the good offices of this official, endowed with such authority, that I first called into requisition at Bordeaux. At the appointed hour, early in the morning, a coach and footman drove up with M. Martin to the place where I was stopping, to conduct me to the temporary Executive Offices of the Government which were in the *Hôtel de Ville*, the City Hall of Bordeaux. Ordinarily, when this ceremony takes place in Paris, it is attended with considerable pomp, the carriage containing the Ambassador being duly escorted by representatives of the French Government and a guard of honour being posted outside to receive him at the Elysée Palace. But in the unusual situation which now surrounded the presentation of my letter of credence, much of this programme was necessarily dispensed with. There was little ceremony beyond passing between the uniformed guards drawn up in line on each side of the walk in front of the building.

Though in America public speakers, even in delivering a more or less official address, do not commonly read from manuscript, yet in France it is quite the contrary. Most

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Frenchmen read their discourses and very often, if they lecture, do so while sitting at a table before their audience. Speaking from manuscript has manifest advantages for the diplomat. Though it robs him of the inspirational element which comes from his audience, or which is often brought forth from the remarks of preceding speakers or from the very occasion itself, yet there is no chance for a slip of the tongue or for indulging in language which is sometimes more eloquent than discreet in its expression. I not infrequently availed myself of this custom, notwithstanding the limitations to effectiveness. This was particularly true during the period of our neutrality. Whenever this practice was followed, I had the comfortable feeling that on the following morning nothing would appear in the newspapers misconstruing my remarks so as to give them a sensational tinge. Under such conditions the difficulty encountered was not so much to find something to talk about, as to be able by intuition to know what not to say.

Arrived at the *Hôtel de Ville*, I was ushered into the large room which in normal times may have been used as the Council Chamber of the municipality. A novel experience was before me, but only the unusual place for carrying out such a ceremony must have differentiated it from the many others of like nature in which the President had participated during his term of office. To him the coming of new, and the going of old, Ambassadors and Ministers was not out of the ordinary. Being conducted to the centre of the room, I was presented to the President, who greeted me with a smile and a cordial shake of the hand. The purpose of my address as well as custom prescribed that it should be brief. I said:

Address of Ambassador Sharp

Mr. President, in conforming to this ceremonial custom in presenting my letter of credence, I have the great honour and pleasure to convey to the Government of the French Republic the best wishes of the President of the United States of America for its prosperity, and to your Excellency, his high personal regard. Let me assure you that in this expression of goodwill, now ripened by the traditions of

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more than a century into a lasting friendship and brotherly love, the people of my country most heartily join. From the very character of that affection and the historic events which gave it origin, I am persuaded that it will be as enduring as the life of these two great Nations.

During my sojourn among the French people, I have come to have an added regard for their exemplification of a brave and patriotic citizenship. In expressing the earnest hope that out of the trials of the present hour may come the blessings of a lasting and beneficent Peace, I but voice the prayers of my countrymen.

One of the important duties of my high office being to cultivate the friendly commercial relations which have so long existed between the two Nations, I anticipate from the high-minded statesmen of your official family a most generous and helpful co-operation to that end. I assure your Excellency that it will be my most cherished purpose to do all in my power to advance the prosperity of both Governments.

In presenting to you my letter of credence, may I also have the honour to present to you the letter of recall of my distinguished predecessor, whose departure for America prevented his doing so in person?

* * * * * *

The following day, the address was given a hearty commendation by the Press throughout France. My words of friendship and admiration for the qualities of the people of France, particularly as to their bravery and patriotism, were especially noticed. That my remarks also found favour in America was attested by M. Jusserand, French Ambassador at Washington, who wrote saying: "Some private letters which I have received since you assumed your office have shown me that you are making your mark, and that the goodwill of my people towards one whose friendly feelings cannot be doubted will certainly never fail you. Your excellent speech when you handed your credentials had its echo in the United States and had the best effect in both countries."

To my remarks, the President replied with that polish of diction for which he is noted.

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Reply of President Poincaré

Mr. Ambassador, I am very much touched by the sentiments that you have so kindly expressed. I know that you are resolved to follow, in the accomplishment of your high mission, the excellent traditions that your predecessors have established. I have had the most cordial personal relations with the two last, Mr. Bacon and Mr. Herrick, and I have been able to appreciate the great services that they have rendered to the fraternal union of the two Republics.

I know also that you have just faithfully conveyed the sympathies of the President of the United States and the thought of your Nation. I can assure you that the whole of France, for its part, has the greatest admiration for the magnificent American civilization and for the eminent qualities of Mr. Wilson.

I thank you for the wishes that you have expressed for the re-establishment of a lasting and beneficent Peace. If it had depended only upon the French Government, Peace would never have been broken. We have responded to a brutal attack with that patriotism and that bravery to which I am sure you will render homage. We are determined to fulfil to the end the duty which has been imposed upon us. That it may be lasting and beneficent, that it may not be illusory and deceptive, it is necessary that the Peace be guaranteed by an integral reparation of violated rights and be safeguarded against future attacks.

I beg you to receive, Mr. Ambassador, my wishes for the prosperity and grandeur of the United States of America, as well as for the personal happiness of your illustrious President.[1]

* * * * * *

If the French newspapers had been favourably impressed with what I had said, they were doubly so in commending the sentiments voiced by the President. His pointed allusion to the determination of France to fulfil the duty to the uttermost which the war had imposed upon her, as well as the reference to the brutality of German aggression, was particularly

[1] M. Poincaré mentions these addresses in his volume *L'Invasion*, p. 482.

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stressed. While it required more than four years for the consummation of such a purpose, and at a sacrifice in loss of life and waste of material which remains the most appalling known to history, yet those who guided the destiny of the Republic never faltered in their determination to attain that goal.

As I review now the solemnity of that hour, and again read the exchanges of sentiments made that day between the President of the Republic and myself, I am impressed with the consistency with which a mutually friendly relationship was maintained between the two countries throughout the trying times of the war. I was also convinced even in that early day, a conviction expressed in both addresses, that the peace that should finally come out of such a titanic struggle should be lasting, and guaranteed in such a way as to be safe against future attacks.

With the exchange of a few informal words in which I expressed my pleasure at meeting President Poincaré and being privileged to represent my Government in such a country as France, the ceremony was over.

It was on this mission to Bordeaux that for the first time I met M. Théophile Delcassé, Minister for Foreign Affairs, a short, quick, nervous, brilliant man, well in the middle age of life, courteous by natural impulse. His kindness to me and sympathy with everything American, all through his service in the Viviani Ministry of that period, I shall always remember in grateful appreciation. A man also who, like the great host of his compatriots, gave an only son to the cause of his country.[1]

It was at a luncheon given on this occasion in my honour by M. Delcassé that I also first met my diplomatic colleagues of the British, Russian, and Japanese Embassies, acquaintances which ripened into warm regard during the following months of my close association with them.

My brief sojourn in Bordeaux enabled me to see how strongly welded had become the patriotic bonds, drawing so closely together every section of France for the mighty

[1] See Chapter V.

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struggle before her. On the day of my departure an occasion presented itself for seeing a ceremony of unusual interest. Mrs. Garrett had asked me to accompany her to an organ recital which was to be given at the Cathedral for the benefit of Belgian refugees. The programme was preceded by an eloquent appeal to the great throng that had gathered, evoking not alone their patriotism for country, but their sympathy for these unfortunates.

From my contact with the people in the various cities in the other departments of France, I had already been prepared for the fervour which I saw so feelingly manifested on this occasion. While there might be jealousies born of commercial rivalries and a lack of homogeneity in certain things, when it came to the call to patriotic duty, there was but one common mind—one united sentiment. It is such pictures as I saw there that day, to be repeated so often in the long years of travail to follow, that must have given to even a sojourner an exalted conception of the spirit which possessed all France.

That night, December 4, I left for Paris and on the following day began my official duties as Ambassador, which I did not lay down until the fourteenth day of April, 1919.

The decision was taken shortly after by the Cabinet to return to Paris on December 9. I understand there had even been strong opposition from several members who considered the change at this time unadvisable for military reasons. This will serve to show what the situation still was three months after the decision for the Government to leave Paris had been reached.

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CHAPTER V

PRISON CAMPS

ONE of my most pressing duties was that of looking after the prisoners from those countries in conflict with the Allied Powers. In addition to the prisoners of war there was no inconsiderable number of civilian *internés*, enemy subjects residing in France who had been sent as rapidly as possible to concentration camps. All through the years 1915 and 1916 and the early part of 1917, that is, until our own entrance into the war, work in this connection greatly increased.

The full measure of embarrassment to an American Ambassador to France, under such circumstances, may be understood if one reflects that he was charged with maintaining the rôle of strict neutrality imposed by his Government in a country bleeding at every pore for the heroic defence of its soil, while looking after the welfare and comfort of the very enemies against whom it was fighting! Added to this, he was obliged to promote friendly relations with the Government to which he was accredited. At the very outset, I would pay a deserved tribute to the French Government, in saying that this task was greatly helped by the tolerant and fair-minded spirit with which it recognized the nature of that embarrassment.

This sentiment received concrete expression on one occasion when, visiting one of the officials at the head of the Bureau dealing with the administration of prison camps, I remarked that the registering of complaints of German prisoners by no means implied criticism by the American Embassy; that having accepted the charge of looking after the interests of these men, the Embassy must undertake to fulfil that trust in a humane and honourable manner. He replied:

"The situation is perfectly understood, and the French

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Government will welcome any information that it may receive upon the conduct of these camps. It only wishes that French prisoners in Germany might receive the same consideration which you have shown to those placed under your protection."

The first winter with all its rigours was now upon us. Already complaints had come from the German Government that the prisoners, particularly in the western portions of France, were scantily clothed, and provision for heating their sleeping quarters must be quickly provided.

Many questions, involving the rules and conduct of warfare, were to be considered. I may mention, as one instance from the French point of view, a statement communicated to me in December, 1914, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the effect that since, in spite of protests which had been made, French officer prisoners were not as well paid as German officers in France, the pay rate in France would be lowered until Germany reciprocated. Too often, complaints were used for the purpose of stimulating the hatred of the enemy for the French. They furnished, in Germany, the basis for a bitter propaganda which was spread broadcast, in the form of editorials and cartoons. Threats of retaliation for abuses charged were the common, as well as constant, method used in seeking to correct them.[1]

Frequent personal visits, by men well qualified for the purpose, formed one of the most important features of the work of properly caring for the prisoners. In the aggregate, several hundred inspection trips were made, the personnel being composed in the main of members of the Embassy Staff.

Our Government at Washington, with an excusable lack of appreciation of the demands which must eventually arise in so many ways, had early directed that no visits should be made to these camps by representatives of the Embassy; nor

[1] As an instance of reprisals, see the case of Lieutenant Goschen, son of the British Ambassador to Germany at the outbreak of war, as related by James W. Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, Chapter X. The general question of prisoners of war in Germany is treated at length by Ambassador Gerard in this book, and also in *Face to Face with Kaiserism*.

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should reports of their conditions be given publicity. This latter inhibition was doubtless caused by certain annoying circumstances which had followed the publication of such accounts in another country. The Department very quickly realized what embarrassing consequences would result if this were repeated.

The work of relief became, however, so urgent that early in 1915 I cabled the Department to the effect that, in my judgment, the obligation which we had accepted could not be fulfilled unless authority were given me to inaugurate a system involving personal visits to these camps wherever and whenever the necessity seemed to exist. As a result of these representations, the Department very promptly directed that such visits should be made as occasion demanded. I at once gathered about me in my office at the Chancery a rather hastily improvised group of men, all Americans, to undertake this task.

Some of my volunteer helpers generously offered their automobiles as well as their services. To them I entrusted the mission of making the first personal inspection of the camps. Dividing those present into pairs, in order that the territory might be covered as quickly as possible, I dispatched them simultaneously in different directions, requesting them to visit as many points as was feasible during the next ten days. Realizing as I did the delicacy of the task which could easily be performed in a wrong way, I impressed upon those gathered about me, that day, the urgent need of conducting their investigation in such a manner that, while being thorough and impartial, they should yet avoid giving offence to French officials in charge of the camps. They were to submit to the Embassy written reports of conditions as they found them; particularly they should inquire into the more urgent needs of the prisoners, civilian as well as military. Special attention was first to be given to the complaints which had been made by the German Government; there were few if any Austrian prisoners of war in France.

Organization was the first thing needed. To this end I asked John W. Garrett, later our Minister at The Hague, to

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direct under my general supervision a part of this work. Then, by direction of the State Department and to help in the same task, came H. Percival Dodge,[1] later Minister to Serbia, and John Gardner Coolidge,[2] also of previous diplomatic experience; subsequently Mr. Coolidge rendered valuable service at Washington in the State Department. All these gentlemen performed most excellent service, and I recall with satisfaction and pleasure our association. Their wives, coming to Paris with them, were conspicuous in relief work of one kind or another in the common effort to do good where it was so constantly needed. They greatly endeared themselves to Mrs. Sharp and charmingly assisted her at many Embassy functions.

The very exigencies of such a task, so diversified in character, developed with time into an elaborate system of administration. The primary consideration involved hygienic conditions of the camps, questions of sufficient food supply and proper housing accommodation. There were, of course, other questions growing out of camp life, such as the opportunity for proper exercise, bathing facilities, and the rigour of work which the military prisoners were required to do. All these conditions naturally varied considerably with the location of the camp and the kind of buildings used. I soon found out also that the temperamental make-up of the official in charge had much to do with the kind of treatment meted out to the prisoners; fortunately there were comparatively few of these officials who were not most considerate in the discharge of their duties.

With the progress of the war, the military prison camps increased to approximately one hundred in number. They were located all the way from Havre across France to Corsica and even in northern Algeria. The number of prisoners in each varied from several hundred to more than a thousand. Of the civilian *interné* camps, there were about a score. From the military prison camps were sent out "detachments" of prisoners, employed in various kinds of manual labour, from

[1] Minister to Denmark since 1926.

[2] A great-grandson of Thomas Jefferson.

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farming and road-building to work in quarries and forests, on railroads, and even in industrial plants. The "detachment" might be large or small, varying from five to five hundred or more, according to the nature of the work assigned to it. In some instances their bases of operation were located many miles from the main camp or "dépôt." When on trips of personal inspection of camp conditions, in riding through the country, I not infrequently saw the military prisoners engaged in substantially all occupations. But the reader may well imagine my surprise when, in riding through the rural districts along the picturesque highway from Poitiers to Châteauroux, I saw a number of German prisoners lazily lying on the lawn in front of the residence of a farmer whose fields they were helping to cultivate. To all outward appearances, they might have been resting after the noon-day meal at their far-off homes in Germany.

Complaints constantly coming in from the Governments of the Central Powers were given the promptest attention. I made it a practice to acquaint myself with their general tenor; in fact, a certain portion of my time was regularly devoted to consultation with those at the head of the different divisions of this labour. Where abuses were found they were reported to the French Government. Quite invariably, the conditions were improved if the facts were considered sufficient.

In order that I might be better informed as to actual conditions existing in the camps, I personally made a number of trips to the larger ones. As the times of my visits covered different seasons of the year, I was in a position to form a fairly adequate conception of the manner in which the prisoners were being cared for. On several occasions, such journeys also had for their object the inspection of hospitals where German patients were confined. This was particularly true of Lyons, where a sort of clearing house had been established for the exchange of invalided German prisoners in France against French prisoners in Germany. Trainload for trainload was the system adopted for returning these unfortunates of both countries to their homes *via* Switzerland.

This was one of the few real accomplishments in humanizing

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the hard conditions of war. In an atmosphere where mutual distrusts characterized every act of the conflicting forces—one need not invoke the names of Lyttelton of Eton[1] and Lord Lansdowne as witnesses—the word "camouflage" was shouted back at every overture looking to an agreement upon any question between them. Under such conditions, the success of the negotiations carried on in Holland between representatives of the British and the German Governments, providing for the exchange of officer prisoners, certainly savoured of the miraculous. I recall reading in the London Press how Lord Newton, who had acted in such negotiations for the British Government, had made his report before the House of Lords, paying the highest tribute to the manner in which both sides had carried on the negotiations, and the scrupulous honour with which that agreement had been observed.

On the occasion of my first trip of inspection at Lyons I witnessed an incongruous sight—one of many vagaries of the war. On the brow of one of the high and picturesque elevations overlooking the city was located one of its two prison hospitals. A more ideal spot for the purpose could hardly have been chosen. Here the pure air from the mountains beyond came down through the valley of the Rhône. Plenty of breathing space was all about. The welcome shade of the great trees spread over the grounds; and with a view at times commanding the Alps, and on clear days even the snowy crest of Mont Blanc, the beholder was made to feel that even prison hospitals had their attenuations.

As I went through the different wards of the hospital, studying with much interest the faces of the patients that I might know something of the seriousness of their illness, I was very favourably impressed with the care given to them. Here and there were those whose robust appearance clearly foretold their recovery. I saw others whose pallid and sunken cheeks indicated that Germans too were not immune from the ravages of tuberculosis, which afflicted so many of the brave soldiers of France.

[1] Dr. Edward Lyttelton, formerly Headmaster at Eton. See Chapter XII, letter of Ambassador Sharp to President Wilson.

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I was next invited to witness, near by, the humane provisions made for their own wounded heroes—*réformés*—who, released from the hospitals, were so crippled as to be no longer of service at the front. Most of them had suffered the loss of a limb. In a few cases both legs were gone. But these poor fellows were still young and must not be left as objects of charity.

In this great work which France, so generously helped by America, had undertaken, I would here bear witness to the thoroughness of the methods—so characteristically French—used at the institution which I visited that day. Those who were able to handle a plough were out in the fields; others, less fortunate, because of the severity of their injuries, were making boots and shoes or articles of household use, some in the line of carpentry, others in the fashioning of various utensils; even the blind were engaged in printing books.

The officials who were showing me about seemed pleased to inform their compatriots that the American Ambassador had wanted to see them. It was a custom, I might say, on the part of those at the head of the widely located institutions which cared for the unfortunates of the war, to tell them that a representative of the great American Republic had called to express his sympathy. It was this attitude on the part of such men, everywhere in France, that somehow made me feel that no greater compensation for so slight a kindness could be rendered than in this touching revelation of their hearts.

An hour's visit to the remaining prison hospital, down in the city proper, completed the work of my special mission to Lyons. I found there an interesting object lesson quite out of the ordinary. In one of the larger wards into which I was conducted there were probably threescore patients. All had been cases for the surgeon. While some were still unable to leave their beds, others more fortunate were standing about the room. In accordance with the practice which prevailed in all the prison camps, and which extended quite as well to the hospitals, the prisoners were put under the discipline of some one of their own officers. As our little

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party entered the well-lighted room, the official in charge called in German, "Attention!" Immediately, all those who were able assumed an erect position, and simultaneously came the clicking of heels together and the regulation salute.

During a conversation with the hospital physician, I asked him from what parts of Germany most of his patients came. He replied that that would be very easy to ascertain. Turning to the official in charge, he asked if he would please request all those present to signify by rising where possible, otherwise by lifting their hands, from what particular German State they came. It was an interesting study to observe these men as they arose in groups at the call. But at the name of "Prussia," by far the largest number arose. There was a vigorous clicking of heels together, a throwing back of the head, and a look of defiance in their eyes, which their unhappy situation in no wise seemed to lessen. Their demeanour betokened as no mere words of description could do the pride which they felt in their origin.

One of those who made up our small party in this trip of inspection was Captain Carl Boyd, my ever-loyal Military Attaché. I had asked him to put in writing the salient points of our observations, that a report might be founded upon it, to be sent to the State Department. Long afterwards, in looking over the outline which he handed me, I recalled with a feeling of sadness his untimely taking away within a brief week in 1919, from pneumonia, which afflicted so many of our American workers in France. His worth had so impressed General Pershing that within a few weeks after the General's arrival in France he intimated to me his desire to place Captain Boyd upon his personal staff. It was with no little diffidence that the Captain, young in years, with a bright future before him, and much coveting this honour, came to ask if it would be agreeable to me if he accepted the offer of General Pershing. Knowing what it meant to him, I told him that while it would be no easy matter for me to replace him, I could not have the heart to stand in his way with such a promotion in sight. Poor fellow! After something more than a year's distinguished service which I know was greatly

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appreciated by General Pershing, Colonel Boyd, as he then was, died of the dread plague—for in its virulency it seemed at times to take such a form. And then, wrapped in the folds of the American flag which he loved so well, the body of this gallant young Colonel from Georgia was laid away beneath a little mound—one of many marked with their white crosses—on the green slopes of the American cemetery at Suresnes, overlooking the city of Paris.

The outstanding impression created in my mind—that which overshadowed everything else concerning prison camp life—was the robust appearance of the prisoner-soldiers. Stalwart of frame, of an average height of three or four inches above the French soldier, they gave the appearance of anything but discontent or ill-health. It was my conviction then, as it is now, that nine out of every ten of them returned to their homes in Germany better men physically than when they left to enter the war. The very regimen imposed in camp life, the kind and quality of food, not too much nor too little, without any opportunity to become intemperate through drink; all this coupled with hard out-of-door work had given to these young men the best of health.[1]

The most disagreeable feature of prison life was the lack, in some places, of suitable sleeping quarters. The sudden and overwhelming demands placed on the French Government at the beginning of the war certainly furnished a legitimate excuse for the inability to supply better accommodation.

At Havre I saw, lying at the docks, a large ship, improvised for housing and feeding several hundred prisoners; for many months they had been thus provided for. But even this novel "prison camp" had many advantages over the conditions which I saw in a large warehouse located further down the quays, which, from want of something more suitable for the purpose, had also been converted into a prison camp. Bunked in very closely together, in tiers, one above another, the

[1] The British Ambassador, Lord Bertie, mentioned in his Diary the well-fed and contented appearance of some 700 German prisoners of war whom he saw at Dieppe October 1, 1916, unloading cargoes of timber from Scandinavia and of oats and steel from the United States.

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prisoners slept here, taking their daily exercise in an enclosure outside of the building. Admiral Biard, Military Governor of Havre, under whose charge these prisoners had been placed, exhibited with no little satisfaction a copy of a letter which one of those quartered in the ship had written home, telling how kindly he and his associates were treated by those in authority over them. Judging from their appearance I had no reason to doubt the truth of his message.

It was in reference particularly to the conditions existing in the large warehouse, that I made my strongest recommendations to the French Government to provide more sanitary sleeping accommodation. It is fair to say, however, that my efforts had only supplemented those which the Admiral himself had already made. At the time of my visit, he took me in his car to an elevated portion of the city, to show me where plans had already been made for the building of large barracks to accommodate the prisoners—an accomplishment which I am pleased to say was rapidly brought to completion. Even these criticisms must be taken to apply only to a limited number of cases where, from lack of such adequate accommodation, unsuitable quarters were converted into sleeping-rooms. The food was wholesome and evidently in sufficient quantity for proper nourishment. I am persuaded, too, from frequent talks with our agents returning from their inspection trips, as well as from my own observations including talks with prisoners, that unkind treatment was very rare.

A story came to my ears of an American contractor being offered a contract for the production of certain supplies. He was told that he would be allowed the use of German prison labour. When, however, he learned that it would be under the supervision of a French official, he declined to take the contract, because, as he said, the French were too indulgent with their prisoners to get out of them the work which was required.

As I have mentioned, it was the rule in the camps to allow German officers to exercise authority over their own men; at least that which pertained to their daily conduct. This

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I saw more than once in their exercises and drill. In some places, large open quarters existed, where, at certain hours of the day, the men gathered and went through their routine exercises. Horizontal bars and other gymnastic equipment were provided for them and they seemed greatly to enjoy the recreation. In close proximity, also, to a number of these camps were running streams of clear water in which the men were required to bathe.

I remember seeing, at the camp in Tours, a handsome young German officer, who seemed to enjoy not only the confidence, but I might say the liking of the French officers. Observing the favours shown him, I asked one of them the reason. He replied that that particular young officer's father was one of the German officers in the city of Cologne who, having charge of French prison camps near there, had shown unusual kindness to their compatriots. They felt that reciprocal treatment was only fair.

In the centre of the broad open space devoted to the prison camps at that place were located many tents in each of which three or four prisoners slept. Noticing that the beds lay flat upon the ground, I said to the officer who was showing me about: "Do you not think that when the cold weather sets in such accommodation will be very inadequate as a protection against the cold and rain?" He replied: "Yes, I have myself made formal recommendation to the Government for bettering these conditions. I hope that a change will soon be brought about." Upon telling him that when I returned to Paris I would be glad to supplement his efforts by a recommendation of my own, he replied: "I am very glad that you came here, for I shall now be more hopeful that changes which I have asked for will be granted." The officer's own attitude in the matter was the best proof to me that he had a real interest in the comfort of those in his charge.

As a sequel to my visit, I was pleased later to receive a report from our inspectors that before the rigours of the following winter had set in, the use of these tents for sleeping quarters for the prisoners had been abandoned and comfortable

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barracks provided. As to the supply of food furnished the prisoners, the position taken by the French officials in charge of these camps was that the food and other accommodation supplied to German prisoners in their keeping should not be any better than those provided for their own soldiers, who were fighting the battles of their country at the front. There was so much justice and reason in this, that little ground remained for controversy.

It was at the camp at Poitiers that the official in charge obligingly furnished me with an exhibition of what was known as the "goose step" of the German soldiers. At a distance perhaps of a hundred yards in front of us were placed several lines of soldiers, one back of the other, officered by their own men. Each line must have embraced at least a hundred men. Upon the word being given, each man in perfect time, with foot high in the air, commenced to march toward us in this rather ludicrous manner. With the leg extended rigidly at right angles from the body, the foot was brought down to the ground with such a resounding whack as to be heard at a great distance. I could see no special object in this kind of drill, unless it were intended to shake every bone and muscle in the soldier's body. Such purpose I have no doubt was entirely accomplished. It was while watching some of the men go through their exercises on horizontal bars that I stepped over to one of them who talked very fair English, and asked him if he were permitted to get any news from the front. With an answer which I thought was designed to be quite negative, I yet saw that he was by no means lacking in a general knowledge of the military situation. As it was a time when the German armies had been unusually successful in the North, the prisoner before me, though guarded in his brief remarks, impressed me as being confident of the outcome; his satisfaction was ill-concealed.

The precautions taken to prevent the smuggling in to prisoners, through packages sent to them from their homes, of articles placed under the ban, were no more ingenious than the methods used to circumvent them. All such packages

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were subjected to the closest kind of examination. Sometimes the search was rewarded by the most curious kinds of discoveries, ranging from important matters of news to knives and small arms sent to aid in making an escape. Though now and then such attempts were attended with temporary success, yet invariably the prisoner was eventually apprehended and returned to the place from which he had escaped.

In all these camps there was afforded an unusual opportunity to study the various types of German soldiers. Many of them but a brief time before had been fighting under their country's flag. Because of the manner in which the armies of all the belligerent nations were recruited, nearly every class of men who could pass muster would be found, in addition to those who were soldiers by profession. As the loss of men on the battlefield grew heavier, the proportion of this last class decreased. The others ranged as a whole all the way from the rather effeminate looking designers of ladies' fashions to the stalwart worker of the shops or fields of his fatherland.

At each camp visited, the French official in charge obligingly insisted that the members of our party should inquire of the prisoners, quite out of his own presence, as to camp conditions. There were few if any complaints made in answer to such questions. In a large majority of cases those so interrogated expressed themselves as well satisfied. But at one of these camps I encountered an amusing exception.

A rather talkative young man came up to me, evidently desirous of exercising his right to make complaints, and fearful of losing some privilege through default in making the protest, rather than from any settled conviction as to its merits. In a most excited manner he said that his fellow prisoners were compelled to walk two miles each morning to their work, and the same distance on returning at the close of the day; it was an abuse that should be corrected. This complaint met with good-natured raillery from his companions standing about, who, evidently valuing the opportunity of getting away from the restraints of the enclosure, those fine summer mornings, and having the freedom and

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exercise which the walks enabled them to enjoy, did not consider them as very serious hardships.

On a second visit of inspection to Lyons, where the military prisoners were being employed to the extent of more than five hundred in the construction of a hospital, one of them was brought to me who spoke excellent English. The officer in charge considerately withdrew, that our conversation might be private. I was surprised to find in this young man all the manners of an American of cosmopolitan life. Speaking in good English, he told me that until the war broke out he had for seven years resided in New York City. He had worked first as a hotel clerk and later engaged in the brokerage business. In reply to my question as to the manner in which he and his fellow prisoners were being treated, he said that he had only words of praise for those in charge. In fact, it would seem that the life of all the prisoners in that camp, many of whom were engaged in this outdoor construction work, differed very little from that which one would expect from a labouring man at home. Perhaps the more restricted accommodation in the sleeping-rooms as provided would mark the greatest departure from home conditions. At no place which I visited did I hear of any cruelties being inflicted, and the reports of the Embassy agents were of a similar tenor, with but very few exceptions.

Upon inspecting the sleeping-rooms in a large camp located in the military barracks which had formerly been used to house French soldiers, I found that whether in the breast of the enemy captive, or in that of the Allied soldier fighting at the front, the constant reminder of those dear to him back home was to be found in the photographs and other mementoes of affection which had been sent to him and which conspicuously covered the walls. Rarely was the face of the mother absent from such a collection. Sometimes tender words had been inscribed below. Many of these prisoners were the recipients, from home, of things more substantial. Such an atmosphere of the recollections of home, permitted to exist about these prisoners, was a testimonial of consideration from their French captors as sentimental as it was generous.

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I have referred thus far to the conditions prevailing in the camps where military prisoners were detained. One of my first trips of inspection, however, gave me the opportunity to study these conditions in the civilian camps. One of the largest of these was located at Châteauroux. A brand new building of large proportions, designed for an insane asylum but never occupied as such, was now devoted to the accommodation of these *internés*. The building was not only sanitary but well adapted for the purpose of housing these unfortunates. At this camp, they numbered approximately one thousand. In many instances the quota was made up of well-to-do tradespeople, German business men, who had been conducting their business in France for many years before the outbreak of the war. My coming had been heralded in advance by the officials in Paris, and upon my arrival I was very politely received by those in charge of the camp. Men, women, and children of all ages grouped themselves together in little knots along the corridors of the building through which our party passed. Some of the men and women, Austrian as well as German subjects, had married into French families.

The thing that impressed me most at Châteauroux was the general contentment which seemed to prevail among those whose freedom was denied them. A large area in the rear of the buildings was devoted to the cultivation of flower beds which were cared for by the prisoners themselves. Each one seemed to have an exclusive proprietorship in an allotted plot of ground for such use. Seeing a number of small children who for humanitarian reasons, if for no other, were allowed to remain with their parents, I was curious to know what provisions were made for their suitable care and instruction. The official in charge, on learning of my interest in this matter, conducted me into a portion of the building which contained several schoolrooms. Here were young French women teaching classes of children from the smallest up to those approaching adult age. I was told that every help was being freely given, that their unhappy condition might not deprive them of educational advantages. Comparatively few complaints were received at the Embassy of

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illtreatment to the civilian *internés*. Except the limitation placed upon their freedom of action in leaving the camps, there was little harshness imposed on them.

Perhaps in no other phase of the great conflict was there better observation of the international rules which are supposed to govern the conduct of war than was evidenced in the treatment of prisoners in France, both civilian and military. I recall on one occasion in the Spring of 1917, after our Embassy had ceased to look after German interests because of the declaration of war by the United States, when I saw many German prisoners employed in chopping wood in the forests north of Amiens. But a few days before, they had been taken prisoners by the British troops. They had just been engaged in the most wanton destruction of the towns of Péronne, Bapaume, Albert, and many of the lesser villages in the wake of the great German retreat of that time. Within a week following that retreat I made a two-day trip through that desolate region, returning by way of Amiens, of which I shall say more later.[1] Riding through the forests en route, as I saw these strapping young fellows working with the glow of health on their cheeks, I could not help but indulge in a little philosophy of my own. It was exceedingly difficult for me to believe that these stalwart men in German uniform, with such accommodation for their comfort and with a regular supply of food provided by those against whom they had been fighting—food equal in quality to that of our lumbermen in the forests of northern Michigan and Wisconsin —were the same who but yesterday had placed the sticks of dynamite under every building of the towns through whose melancholy ruins I had just passed! And yet a twentieth century civilization, which must tolerate such desolation, must religiously care for the health and well-being of the destroyers, even though but the day before their hands were stained with the blood of those who fought but to defend their homes. It all seemed to me such a strange abortion of humanity's high purpose, that the horrors of war could be looked upon by no inconsiderable portion of mankind as a sort of recognized

[1] See Chapter XIV.

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necessity, the visitation of which must come from time to time to the people of the earth quite as the normal order of things—indeed for their advancement!

The duties involved in looking after the prisoners' interests by no means ended with visits to these prison camps and the making of reports thereon to Washington. Such visits indeed were only the prelude to a far greater amount of work placed upon the shoulders of the Embassy.

The discharge of these duties involved a great amount of correspondence and the keeping of upwards of forty thousand separate accounts, occasioned by the remittance to many of these prisoners of certain monthly allowances furnished by their several Governments. The entire voluminous *dossier*, comprising thousands of pages, extending over the time during which I had charge of German interests in France, is characterized by more frequent references to retaliations by the German and Austrian Governments in return for the alleged prison abuses in France, than any other one subject.

Such threats were usually accompanied by an ultimatum which provided that if corrections were not made within a certain time, the most dire results would follow. To all intents and purposes the innocent French prisoners, who had already hazarded their lives in defending their country, were to be held as a sort of hostage on whom was to be vented more cruel treatment by those in charge of them if their own Government failed to comply with such and such requirements. These threats, in so far as they were made by the German Government—and substantially the purely military prisoners in France were all of that nationality—were of course conveyed to me through my esteemed colleague Mr. Gerard, the American Ambassador at Berlin.

Whether the embarrassment which I have no doubt often came to him, in conveying these complaints and threats to me at the request of the German Government, was greater than my own in being compelled to lay them before the French Government, I do not know. Involving, however, as they did, threats ranging all the way from shortening hours of out-door exercise, lessening of rations, solitary confinement,

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etc., to the actual execution of prisoners, the trust devolving on me to prevent their being carried out was no light responsibility. As nearly every individual complaint had a history back of it—a *dossier* in the Embassy files—the human interest attached to some of them may well be imagined. I shall never forget the concern which at times came to me when, in particular, threats to execute some French prisoner in retaliation for an alleged maltreatment of a German prisoner reached the Embassy. In every case a time-limit was set. I could not help but feel a share in the responsibility assumed by the French Government, to whom I had communicated the German complaint, in seeing that no French prisoners, all innocent of any wrongdoing themselves, should meet such a fate. Never was there closer tab kept on the fleeting days of those time-limits than when they had to do with such possible tragic consequences.

Perhaps the most persistent effort in behalf of any one prisoner was that made for von Schierstaedt, a German officer to whom Mr. Gerard, in his most interesting book, "My Four Years in Germany," has referred at some length.[1] The perusal of the account of this incident only confirmed me in my belief at the time, that this particular prisoner had powerful friends at home. He had been captured in the first days of the war, as he was reconnoitring, I believe, near Fontainebleau, in a territory quite in advance of the main German army. It was as much the desire to enable my colleague "to make good," to use an American vernacular, as my sense of obligation, which caused me to make an unusual effort in this case. I succeeded better than I had hoped. The voluntary return of prisoners—especially when they have the rank of officers—is not an easy matter to bring about between belligerent Powers. First, succeeding in preventing his deportation to Guiana, which had already been decided upon, I felt that to be able to do much more would be well nigh out of the question.

[1] Ambassador Gerard in Chapter XIV of his book pays a tribute to the action by which "our very skilled Ambassador in Paris" conducted this case to a satisfactory solution found by Mr. Sharp himself.

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Unexpected circumstances only added to my difficulty. The young son of M. Delcassé, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, soon after the beginning of the war in which he had been gallantly fighting, was captured and confined in a German prison. Seizing upon this opportunity to enforce their demands, the German Government had let it be plainly known that unless von Schierstaedt could be freed and sent home, more severe discipline might be administered to young Delcassé. And it was with his father, because of his position in the French Government, that I must carry on negotiations.[1]

With a high conception of duty, even though the health and perhaps the very life of an only son were at stake, the affectionate father must remain first a Minister of State. In such a capacity, the fate of his own son must mean no more to him than that of the sons of a million other fathers in France. When I brought the demand of the German Government to the Minister's attention, reluctant as I was to do so under the unusual circumstances, M. Delcassé told me with just indignation that the very fact that such a threat had been made precluded his making any favourable recommendation in the matter. He could not sign the order even if the life of his son hung in the balance! I shall never forget the bitterness of his voice, nor the scorn with which he received this ultimatum of the German Government. Surely the display of the ways past understanding of German psychology, so much talked of during the war, was never made more manifest than in this particular instance. In full sympathy with his position as well as his anguish of spirit over this new fate which might be meted out to his son, I could urge the matter no further.

Some time later it developed that von Schierstaedt's mental condition had become such as to warrant his confinement in

[1] Théophile Delcassé's reputation was based principally on his policy as Minister for Foreign Affairs 1898–1905, when he consolidated the Franco-Russian Alliance, negotiated the Entente Cordiale with England, and advocated resistance against Germany which led to his being dropped from the Rouvier Cabinet in 1905 during the first Moroccan crisis. His last portfolio was held during the World War in the Viviani National Defence Cabinet, 1914–15. He died in 1923

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a medical hospital, in which case there was good cause for his repatriation. Later the prisoner was examined by medical experts who were unanimous in their finding as to his mental incapacity. The upshot of the matter was that after a time he was allowed to return to Germany. Whether the German Government had still kept in mind the Delcassé of the Algeciras incident may be left to conjecture.

Some time after the conclusion of this case I received the following letter from Ambassador Gerard at Berlin:

Ambassador Gerard to Ambassador Sharp.

Embassy of the United States
of America,
Berlin, Germany.

My dear Colleague:

Thank you for your letter of September 21st, re Stracwitz and Schierstaedt.

Von Jagow, Minister for Foreign Affairs, has asked me to express to you his gratitude, and that of his Government, for all your splendid work in this affair. They are all very grateful.

You have no idea how important the matter was considered here. There were thousands of articles in the newspapers, cartoons, etc., and the greatest interest. You certainly worked out a difficult situation in a wonderful way. Again congratulations.

With best wishes,
Yours ever,
JAMES W. GERARD.

October, 3, 1915.
His Excellency Hon. William G. Sharp,
American Ambassador,
Paris, France.

I would be happy if I might tell my readers of a similar good fortune for the brave young Delcassé. But his fate must furnish a sad sequel to my story. Subjected, in the face of my intercession for humane treatment, to the harsh regimen of the prison camp, much of the time living under conditions anything but conducive to health, he remained

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long a prisoner. Finally he was sent to Switzerland in a very enfeebled condition and there died a victim of tuberculosis.[1] The sorrowing father, mother, and sister had but the solace of bringing his poor body back for burial in the soil of his beloved France. In answer to a letter which I wrote to M. Delcassé, expressing my deep sympathy over the untimely loss of such a noble son, there came back to me a few days later these simple words of appreciation:

"With all my heart I thank you, my dear Ambassador, for your mark of warm sympathy. It is singularly precious to me and I am very deeply touched by it as well as my wife and daughter. I pray you, my dear Ambassador, to accept with my best remembrance, the expression of all my gratitude."

One day early in February, 1917, a telegram, not at all unexpected by me, came from the State Department directing me in substance to discontinue my work in behalf of German prisoners. The United States Government had taken the first step leading to war with Germany. It had not been a difficult matter, during the preceding months, to predict a time when the tense situation which had existed between the United States and the Central Powers, so aggravated by the accumulating horrors of submarine warfare, must cause a rupture of diplomatic relations. Only the most enthusiastic optimist could believe that such a step once taken would not eventuate in a declaration of war.

On February 6, I telegraphed the Department: "Have suspended all activities on behalf of Germany and notified consuls to this effect." This brief message signalized the dropping of the curtain upon a scene of activities which in their importance, extent of effort, and burdens of responsibility have never before, I believe, been imposed by one nation upon another.[2] When a few days later I turned over

[1] In the summer of 1918.

[2] When Ambassador Sharp was given an ovation in the House of Representatives on August 28, 1916, Representative Bennett, of New York, paid a tribute to him, saying he "had achieved the difficult task of making himself *persona grata* with two belligerent nations" by "the proper performance of his Ambassadorial duties and looking after German soldiers who had been taken as prisoners on French soil."

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all the archives and records, consisting of innumerable documents, to my venerable colleague, M. Lardy, for thirty-four years Minister to France from Switzerland, which country Germany had asked thenceforth to represent her interests, he was overwhelmed at the magnitude of the work so suddenly thrust upon him. It became necessary for that Legation to employ a large extra clerical force; and to them, for some time, those of the personnel of my Embassy, long and faithfully identified with this task, gave their most hearty assistance.

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CHAPTER VI

MY DAYS AT THE CHANCERY

JUST as France was the real battleground of the war, so Paris became a Mecca for every leading figure in the tragedy. The subsequent selection of that city as the seat of the Peace Conference but emphasized the fact. This prominence, added to the conspicuous place which the United States occupied among her sister nations, gave to the American Embassy in Paris a position of unusual interest.

Taking a retrospective view of the events which crowded into every hour of those years, I have wondered if it fell to the lot of anyone else to have seen and talked with so many men of world-wide reputation. As I look back at those who figured in the chief rôles which the war imposed upon the representative men of the Allied and neutral Powers, I do not recall one I did not meet. There seemed but one thing in which there was a marked homogeneity: all came with great earnestness of purpose to achieve the task set before them. The very seriousness of the situation, at no time free from menace, made this necessary. But in methods and mannerisms, in dominant characteristics, how different they were! Each left indelibly impressed upon my mind something strongly indicative of the man himself.

In this mélange of distinguished visitors to Paris were kings, queens, princes, premiers, statesmen, philosophers, generals, and admirals. Of these I have had, or shall have, occasion to speak frequently throughout this book. Last to come, and one whose visit attracted the greatest attention, was our own President Wilson.

I have here referred to the visitors at my Embassy residence. My diplomatic colleagues I most commonly met at official functions, when they were not in my home or I in theirs.

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But the visitors at the Chancery ran the whole gamut of human character. Pathos and humour came in and went out, cheek by jowl. The meeting and disposing of their wants constituted no small part of the Embassy's duties.

I soon found that the requests of American citizens were not the only ones to be considered; others in great numbers found their way to No. 5 rue de Chaillot. This was especially true during the period of our neutrality, when the citizens or subjects of Allied nations could communicate with their sons, fathers, or brothers, often prisoners in enemy camps, only through American intermediation. Time and again, I was asked to call upon my American colleagues in Berlin, Vienna, or Constantinople, and occasionally far-off Petrograd, in behalf of anxiety-laden hearts of wives and mothers who besought my aid. Even Cabinet members of the French Government used the good offices of the American Embassy to relieve their concern over the conditions of those most precious to them. In one instance, the wife[1] of a former Premier must know the fate of her soldier son, from whom she had not heard for many months. In another, the treatment accorded to the son of a Foreign Minister[2] imprisoned in Germany must needs be investigated.

It was General Townshend's[3] wife, who, coming to see me one day with her aged father, told me that not for a long time had she been able to get word from her distinguished husband. He was held prisoner by the Turks at Constantinople, after the memorable siege of Kut; she greatly feared for his safety. Promising to do what I could for her, I telegraphed to my esteemed colleague Ambassador Elkus, at that distant capital, of my desire that he make inquiry and, if possible, see the General in person. With that ability and initiative which characterized his services all through those trying times, he wired back within forty-eight hours the

[1] Madame Viviani.

[2] Théophile Delcassé, see Chapter V.

[3] The late Major-General Sir Charles Townshend, in command of the 1st Mesopotamian Expedition. He had served in South Africa, the Sudan, and India. Lady Townshend was the daughter of Comte Louis Cahen-d'Anvers.

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desired information that he had seen the General, who was in good health and being well cared for. When I communicated this news to Lady Townshend, she paid my country a tribute by saying that all her efforts in other directions to get such information had failed. Though she was French by birth and by her marriage a British subject, it had taken American diplomacy to get even a word of news from her husband.

Even in Berlin, similar requests were respected on a number of occasions. Within the very week of the brutal execution of Edith Cavell, I received a hurried telephone call at my home one evening, after I had returned from my office. It came from Madame Waldeck-Rousseau, the widow of the famous French statesman of twenty years ago. In the greatest concern she supplemented a request which had been made to me late that afternoon by M. de Margerie[1] of the Foreign Office, that I communicate with my Government at Washington asking President Wilson to use his good offices with the Emperor of Germany to prevent the execution by the military authorities of two young French ladies then residing in Belgium. The Minister had already cabled to Ambassador Jusserand at Washington, asking him to intercede with our Government.

In her appeal to me, Madame Waldeck-Rousseau stated that these young ladies, one of whom was related to her, had been sentenced to death and the execution of the sentence was but a matter of forty-eight hours.[2] She said that while the King of Spain and the Pope had been asked to use their good offices in preventing the sentence from being carried out, yet she wished to appeal to me as the representative of America. Late as was the hour, I at once sent off an urgent cablegram to Washington embodying this request and emphasizing the extreme gravity of the situation.

The swiftness with which events moved in this stirring

[1] M. de Margerie, Director of Political Affairs at the Foreign Office, appointed French Ambassador to Belgium 1919, Ambassador in Berlin since 1922. He served as Secretary of Embassy in Washington, attended the Algeciras Conference, and was French Minister in Peking.

[2] They were tried and condemned at the same time as Edith Cavell, but the death sentence was not rendered immediately executable.

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drama with its scenes laid in Paris, Washington, and Berlin may be better realized by the reader if I set out paraphrased copies of the telegrams which had meant life or death to two helpless women.

Telegram from Ambassador Sharp to the Secretary of State.

Paris, *October* 16,
11 P.M., 1915.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

Two French ladies, Mrs. Thuilliez, a teacher at the college of Liége, and Miss Jeanne de Belleville, it is reported, will be executed at Brussels next Monday, the 18th instant. They will be executed on the charge of aiding the escape of their own countrymen. There is no charge of spying. Much concern is manifested here over the report, and their relatives, among whom is Madame Waldeck-Rousseau, the widow of a former distinguished French Premier, have earnestly besought the Embassy to call the attention of the Department of State to their plight in the hope that the Government of the United States might feel moved to endeavour to have the penalty mitigated. The Pope, I understand, has also been approached to intervene in their behalf.

SHARP.

The State Department to Ambassador Sharp.

Washington, *October* 18, 6 P.M.

American Embassy,
Paris.

Referring to your telegram No. ——, of October 16th, the following telegram has been sent to the American Embassy at Berlin on October ——:

The French Ambassador has stated that Jeanne de Belleville at Brussels and Madame Thuilliez at Liége have been sentenced by German authorities to be executed Monday eighteenth. President hopes that it will be possible for you

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to use your good offices to have sentence commuted. You will use your discretion as to propriety of making request after learning nature of the cases.

LANSING.

Washington, *October* 21, 1915.

American Embassy,
Paris.

Your ——, October 16th, from Berlin: Jeanne de Belleville and Madame Thuilliez will probably be reprieved. Their case has been laid before the Emperor with statement of President's interest.

LANSING.

Thus was averted the commission of a crime which had very much the same stage setting as the tragedy which, at that moment, was stirring the world's compassion in the case of poor Edith Cavell.[1]

Answering my letter to Madame Waldeck-Rousseau, communicating the good news and briefly reciting the steps that had been taken by the Government at Washington in bringing about such a happy result, she wrote me:

Madame Waldeck-Rousseau to Ambassador Sharp.

October 23, 1915.

Mr. Ambassador,

I am very grateful to you for your efficacious intervention and for the good news which you give me. I am full of hope now—I have passed through cruel days. What an abomination,—and we are in the Twentieth Century!

Kindly receive, Mr. Ambassador, the assurance of my deep gratitude and of my high consideration.

M. WALDECK-ROUSSEAU.

[1] For the case of Edith Cavell, see Brand Whitlock, *Belgium Under German Occupation*, Vol. II, Chapters I–V, and Hugh Gibson, *A Journal from our Legation in Belgium*, last chapter.

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Upon writing a letter of similar import to M. de Margerie, I received a reply from him expressing his deep appreciation:

M. de Margerie to Ambassador Sharp.

Ministry for
Foreign Affairs.

République Française,
Paris, *October* 25, 1915.

My dear Ambassador,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of the personal letter which you were good enough to address to me on the 23rd instant, informing me that, according to a telegram from the Department of State, President Wilson had warmly intervened with the German Emperor to save the life of Countess Jeanne de Belleville and of Madame Thuilliez, condemned to death by the German military authorities in Brussels.

I beg to assure you, my dear Ambassador, that we are particularly touched by the zeal with which you, acting for a charitable and humanitarian purpose, were so kind as to second our efforts to save the lives of those two unfortunate ladies.

It was with great relief that we learned that this result had doubtless been definitely attained. I wish furthermore to express to you our deep gratitude for your efficacious intervention. We have already requested M. Jusserand to convey to President Wilson the expression of our very great gratitude.

Pray believe me, my dear Ambassador, etc., etc.

P. DE MARGERIE.

The details of one other story I shall always remember. It was in the month of August, 1917, while spending a few hours at Havre en route to Houlgate-on-the-Sea, where my family were located for a time. I was told by Consul Osborne of the culmination of the case of a young American hailing from San Francisco, who without some intervention would be shot on the following day by order of a court-martial. The charge was desertion from the Australian Army, and he had

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already been tried and convicted. While questions affecting his case had been brought to the attention of the Embassy some time before, yet I had not known of the final decision until this word came from the Consul.

The story of this unfortunate young man excited first my curiosity and then my compassion. Upon learning that the prisoner was to be taken that afternoon to the Consul's office where he was to make a last statement, I arranged to be present, but requested that for the time my identity be not made known either to the prisoner or to the military guards who conducted him there.

Within a few minutes after I had reached the Consulate, the prisoner was led up the winding stone steps, between two officers, to the little front office on the second floor, where we were waiting. Showing no signs of fear, yet very pale, with drops of perspiration standing out on his forehead, the man was evidently labouring under a great mental strain. Asked by the officer if he had any statement to make, he told how he had gone to Australia some years before. Upon the breaking out of war he had enlisted with the Australian troops and had later come over the seas with his company to France. While in the camp awaiting orders to go to the front, an antagonism between him and his comrades had sprung up; he had resented what he termed as the insulting attitude of some of them toward his country.

After hearing his straightforward story, I became convinced that notwithstanding his admission that he had had a wayward career, separating from his wife and leaving behind him a little son, he was at heart a brave and patriotic man. Upon the Consul's request that I be permitted to ask the prisoner some questions, I learned the name of his father, and other facts connected with his life in a Far Western city. It was the story of a wanderer who had not yet found himself, nor come to feel the sense of his responsibility to others.

Realizing that no time was to be lost if his life were to be saved, I immediately called into requisition the long distance telephone, communicating with my office at Paris. Having first written out the cablegram which I wished to send to

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Washington, I telephoned the message to Mr. Bliss with the request that it be forwarded immediately, so that the Department might verify as soon as possible the statements made by the condemned soldier. Through Mr. Osborne, I let it be known to General Nicholson, commanding the British Base at Havre, that I was personally interested in the case of this young man. In the interest of justice and mercy, I asked if he would not suspend execution of the sentence until his statements could be verified, and perhaps some request for clemency be forthcoming from my Government. This humane officer informed the Consul that the sentence had been submitted to higher authority for consideration, and assured him that under the circumstances there was no immediate danger of execution.

A day or two later, I received corrobation from the Secretary of State of the truth of the statements made by the prisoner. With the reply came the direction to intercede in so far as the facts warranted. The sentence was commuted to five years' penal servitude, and this was further suspended in order that he be sent to the front. He was given the opportunity by gallant conduct to make amends for his offence and wipe out the sentence. I learned eventually that he had communicated with his family and had returned to Australia a free man.

Possessing as I do a fairly accurate knowledge of the various steps early taken in this young man's case, requiring so much of promptness and initiative, I cannot speak too highly of the important part which Consul Osborne played in bringing it to such a successful conclusion.

Two other cases I recall as being of interest were those of M. Halot, a prominent member of the Belgian Senate, who was a prisoner of war in Germany for nearly two years, and M. Théodore, head of the Belgian Bar. They came into the Chancery in April, 1918, to thank me for having interceded to help get them both out of German prisons. M. Halot confirmed what I had heard, that the people of Germany were then everywhere praying for Peace.

While even in the distress of a great war, comparatively

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few requests made upon the Embassy involved a possible tragedy, yet in many of them the element of deepest human interest predominated.

It is doubtful whether there was anything in the category of requests which the human mind could evolve that did not at one time or another come up for consideration by the Embassy. For practically everything that pertained to human endeavour, except in the purely domestic matters in the home, this intercession was sought by the person in trouble. But withal, far from being an annoyance, the opportunity was furnished me very many times, even at slight trouble, of being of the greatest service to those who knew not where else to turn.

On one occasion, a poor French mother came to the wife of my *concierge* with whom she was acquainted. She humbly asked if I would intercede in the interest of mercy, to secure mitigation of a sentence which the police authorities had passed upon her son. He was a boy perhaps fourteen or fifteen years of age. With one or two companions he had taken some cakes of trifling value from the store consigned to American troops. I let it be known to the Judge having the consideration of their cases that while appreciating the desire which the French officers had shown to protect the property of the American Army, yet I was sure that no American officer would want a severe sentence imposed on these boys who were in part the support of their mothers. As a result, the sentence of many months in a reformatory was mitigated to a few days, with a warning to the young culprits to be better behaved in the future.

Were these properly a part of the duties of an American Ambassador to France? I take it that the distress which prevailed on every side had a right to expect and demand the intervention of any power which might soften its rigour.

In such times everybody, regardless of title or position, seemed to be levelled to the common plane of just ordinary human beings. Neither geographical lines of residence nor difference in nationality were bars to such an appeal. To give official sanction to a word which, addressed to the proper

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authorities, would remove suspicion directed against some poor human being who already had sufficient burdens to carry —such cases were not few; to write letters of introduction which would pave the way for merited courtesies; to obtain news of the last hours and burial-place of some soldier boy, to be sent to the American father and mother across the sea; to direct some charitable work in the channel where it was most needed; to encourage, by name and presence, the inauguration of some humane effort; finally, to be a sort of clearing-house for the settlement of all difficulties in which the power of the Embassy could be invoked—these became in part the regularly accepted and matter-of-course duties of the American Embassy in Paris. They gave to the service of the Embassy that unique character which differentiated it from what had ever before been experienced.

While the Foreign Office was usually very obliging in complying with my many requests, yet there was one class of cases which, particularly before our own entrance into the war, without exception met the most obdurate lack of sympathy. In fact I do not recall a single instance where any such request was granted. I refer to the cases of those unfortunates who, having been placed on the suspect list, were ordered to be deported from France. Once this order had been made, no representation, even on the part of the Washington Government, prevented its execution. While the number of cases of Americans actually deported was not large, yet the names of those of all nationalities and all degrees of respectability on the suspect list were legion. Nevertheless, in comparatively few cases were there substantial grounds for suspecting disloyalty.

I remember, on one occasion, an American lady of eminent respectability had called to see me at the Embassy, to discuss various topics relating to charitable effort. During the conversation she remarked that she had heard that a certain lady, whom she mentioned, was on the suspect list. Poor woman, she little knew that at that very time her name too was on that same list! But it was in the days when suspicion and distrust were rife. It took the courage of M. Stephen Pichon,

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then editor of *Le Petit Journal*, though later Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Clemenceau Ministry, to denounce the wholesale practice of levelling suspicion indiscriminately against the citizens of the Republic. In one of his contributed articles published on November 1, 1917, under the title "Prosecutions vs. X," he not only pointed out the dangers which might follow from such a campaign of distrust, but he called for such a restoration of mutual confidence as would put an end to this practice.

Discovery of plots in unexpected quarters had, in fact, created an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion against which the highest position seemed to give no immunity. During the days of the Bolo trial,[1] followed by that of some of high position in the Government, under the charge of treasonable conduct, announcements in the Press each morning brought to light new names of those who had been summoned before Captain Bouchardon. The atmosphere was so charged with this suspicion of almost everybody that it did not seem a far cry to the scenes that must have been witnessed when the excesses of the French Revolution were at their height. Only a common danger from without and that strong conservatism beneath the surface, which, kept in its full original power, will ever prevent France from turning Bolshevik or revolutionary, sustained the confidence of the masses in their Government under such trials. In some cases, even conditions in themselves wholly free from any taint of guilt exasperatingly contributed to draw down the suspicion of those engaged in the secret service work.

Many stories could be told of persons of wealth and high social position who found it necessary to enlist the good offices of the Embassy and explain some circumstance which had caused their names to be placed on the suspect list. In one instance, one of my most esteemed colleagues, Baron Wedel-Jarlsberg, the Norwegian Minister, found it necessary to appeal to me, protesting in the most emphatic manner

[1] Bolo Pasha, condemned by Court Martial and executed in 1918 for intelligence with the enemy and receiving enemy gold. See also Chapter XII.

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against the refusal of the authorities to allow one of his countrymen to leave France for America. In vain he offered to vouch personally for the loyalty and good standing of this young man. Courtesy to a colleague, and to the Government which he represented, warranted me in making his representations known to the Department of State. But even then it was with the greatest difficulty that this name was removed from the list under suspicion. The cases of others connected in such a way as to create, if known, a veritable international scandal were brought to the Embassy to smooth out. Publicity would only have whetted the appetite of the sensation-monger and brought unmerited sorrow to others entirely innocent. By no means, however, should it be assumed that all suspicions were groundless.

On one occasion I had received advices from Washington that a certain woman of foreign descent, supposed to be stopping for the time in Paris, was the mother of an American citizen residing in a Western city, who had vouched for her loyalty and respectable character. A few days after she had departed for Switzerland, I received communication from the French Government that she was considered to be the most dangerous spy in Europe and would be shot if apprehended. At another time, through a spy getting possession of an American passport, German experts had had it so cleverly forged that only the different shading of the tail feathers of the American eagle engraved on it betrayed the forgery.[1] I am sure, from that time on, no picture of the American eagle, especially of his tail feathers, ever received more careful scrutiny than it did from our passport bureau. The passports of others had been stolen and the owners impersonated by the thieves while crossing into Switzerland. In one such

[1] Cf. Ambassador Gerard: "All Americans were required to have their passports stamped at the Foreign Office. One American did not receive back his passport, although he had left it at the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office claimed that it had delivered the passport to someone from the Embassy, but we were not very much surprised when this identical passport turned up later in the possession of Lody, the confessed German spy, who was shot in the Tower of London." *My Four Years in Germany*, Chapter IX.

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case, however, the thief on being stopped at the Swiss frontier gave solemn assurance that he was the person therein mentioned. His conduct being judged suspicious, a telegram of inquiry as to his identity was sent to me by the authorities detaining him. Prompt investigation disclosed the fact that the real owner of the passport, an American newspaper correspondent, was at that moment in the capital of another country five hundred miles distant, and that his original passport had been stolen from him.

The number of this class of cases involving either applications for my intercession by suspected persons, or the request for the Embassy's activities in new directions of investigation of persons suspected, increased greatly until the close of the war. My experiences in considering them became a veritable school for the studying of human nature. The necessity for prompt action in considering cases where worthy people, entitled to the full protection of American citizenship, found it necessary to visit other countries, resulted in the Department's giving to me more and more discretion in the issuing of emergency passports. Often the exigencies of the case were such that there was not sufficient time to receive specific instructions from Washington. Not infrequently American soldiers, being granted a brief furlough in Paris, desired to visit England to see some distant relative of the family back home, who might be seriously ill or have some other cause perfectly justifying such permission.

Where the passport bureau was in doubt, on more than one occasion I requested to see the applicant but for a moment. "Show him in," became my stereotyped order to Mr. Benjamin Thaw, Jr., our capable passport expert on such occasions. To see the person's face and to study his demeanour became the most certain guide by which to judge him. Quite invariably his appearance, and his answers to a few questions which I asked, satisfied me fully as to the genuineness of his reasons. In all my experience of cases covering every variety and kind, I recall but one or two deceptions being practised, or my confidence imposed upon.

But I am sure the most annoying type of individual who

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came to seek the good offices of the Embassy was the man who persistently refused to recognize the restraints imposed by the war. Such people could not see why the war should make any difference in their plans, nor why restrictions should be placed upon their movements. While most of this class consisted of those who had come over ostensibly on some relief work, and had later become inspired by a curiosity to see what was going on at the front, yet there were also those who were engaged in private business enterprises of one kind or another.

Of the latter, I remember one young man who, representing large manufacturing interests in America, desired to make a hurried trip to London. Coming to my office late one afternoon, he informed me that he wished to leave on the following day; that after spending the Saturday in that city attending to his business, he desired very much to return on Sunday by a certain route across the Channel. He knew, as I did, that this route was used, on Sundays, exclusively in the service of carrying important official communications, and only those employed in governmental positions could avail themselves of the privilege of that crossing.

Surprised at his desire to return so promptly, after telling him the difficulties in the way of getting such permission for him, I asked why he did not return on Monday. He made the surprising reply that he must return on Sunday in order not to lose a day in his business in Paris. Upon hearing such a reason, I declined to make any request of the Government for a departure from its rules. I also expressed my surprise that he should so strongly object to losing a day in his business at a time when that of those around him had been all but destroyed, and the very lives of thousands of men were being sacrificed every day in order that he might be permitted to reside safely in Paris and carry on any business at all!

But I am persuaded that even the stern restrictions imposed by war should not always intervene to prevent freedom of action where romance holds its sway. It would be hard indeed to refuse a request involving apparently so much happiness to two young people as the letter which I received

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from a young American girl, sojourning in Paris would indicate. First informing me as to the nature of her war work—highly creditable—she expressed a most earnest desire to go to England as soon as possible. Supplied with excellent letters of introduction and recommendation, she was still held back by the British Consul. She wrote:

"I do not want to wait a long time, Mr. Sharp, before proceeding to my work in England, I want to see my fiancé, who is a Major of the ——, and whom I could marry if I could only get to England. He is a Mons man and has been right through the war from the beginning of August, 1914, and I am all he has got—no father, mother, or sisters. He leaves for Saloniki and this is our only chance to see each other and arrange for our marriage. We have been through so much, Mr. Sharp. If you will only help me to get over quickly, I will see Major ——, my fiancé, and after he leaves for Saloniki, I shall proceed directly to ——, and do my work. Oh, Mr. Sharp, will you help us! A few days and I may miss Harry altogether . . . Please forgive this hurried letter but both my fiancé and myself felt it would be terrible to miss each other when he is going way down to Saloniki."

I thought so too.

But outclassing, in so far as frequency was concerned, all requests made by my compatriots for favours, that of securing permission to go to the front by far predominated. The guise under which this favour was asked by some, and the circumlocution indulged in by others leading up to such a request, furnished a most enlightening means of gauging human character. Some of its phases were as humorous as they were remarkable for the display of the quality called "nerve." While such requests—and I respected them whenever they seemed justified—could hardly be termed unnatural, yet in not a few cases the morbid curiosity to get into the first line trenches, where their every footstep would be in the way of all those to whom stern duty alone gave the right to be there, was beyond my understanding. One of these whose business in Paris, wholly private, had not the remotest connection with military operations, came into my office one day to announce

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that having now finished his work, he was about to return home. After beating about the bush for some minutes, he expressed a very earnest desire to go right into the front trenches where men were wounded and bleeding; he wanted to tell his friends that he had had that experience!

It would have been impossible without the valuable assistance of my staff to give attention to all the demands on the Embassy. In particular when receiving callers, Mr. Bliss and Mr. Frazier were of great aid.

While I was compelled to adopt the rule of meeting many of my callers by appointment, yet I found it a most difficult task on occasions to divide my time so that, giving them audience, my purely official duties should in no wise be neglected. But toleration was one of the virtues of these times, and the indulgent patience shown me by those to whom I could give but briefest time, or perhaps be compelled to ask them to call again, was something more appreciated by me than they could know. At times, however, the best system of apportioning my daily routine of labour, which commenced shortly after nine in the morning and with usually but a short hour of intermission for luncheon, continued often until seven o'clock in the evening, was not sufficient guarantee of keeping all my engagements.

On one occasion the Grand Duke Alexander, a cousin of the Tsar of Russia, had sent in a request for an audience with me; he desired to acquaint me with the conditions, then very much disturbed, in his own country. Having made an appointment with him at an early hour in the afternoon, I found that on account of an unexpected visit from Mr. Bartholoni, my landlord, I could not return to the Chancery in time to keep my engagement. Telephoning this fact to my office to ask my distinguished caller if he would excuse my delay, I found to my regret that he had already called and left.

The next day I received a letter from him which, though expressed in the politest language, plainly indicated his displeasure and concluded with a statement that in all his life he had never before been so treated. The fact that it had

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been entirely my fault prevented me from having the slightest feeling of resentment over the tone of his letter. There being but one thing for me to do, I at once dispatched a note to him expressing my deep regret at my failure to keep the appointment, explaining to him the reason and assuring him at the same time that I would feel most honoured if, pardoning my action, he would call to see me at the Embassy residence at any time most convenient to him.

The generous answer which he returned proved him to be the big man which I found him to be on meeting him. Of fine presence, somewhat under the middle age of life, thoroughly democratic in manner, he yet had those inherent attributes of a distinguished lineage which would impress all who met him. Indeed, I found in him not only a most charming gentleman, but one who was exceedingly well posted upon the conditions of his country. Under the circumstances, I felt it a duty quite as much as a pleasure to give to my visitor all the time he wished. Our conversation that afternoon lasted for a full hour, during which he gave to me an intensely interesting résumé of the danger with which, from his viewpoint, Bolshevism threatened the world's security. I well recall the dramatic manner in which he exclaimed: "Great as has been the moral support which America has given to Russia, her aid has come too late to save the situation of my country. The condition of our people is hopeless, all is chaos."[1]

There were finally callers at the Chancery who, wanting nothing themselves, gave that kind of information which often enabled me to cable most valuable reports to the Department. Yesterday, perhaps, a returning Special Agent from Constantinople; to-day, a Secretary from Berlin; to-morrow, an impartial observer from some other distant point, none of them so far removed, however, from the scenes of actual war-

[1] Ambassador Henry Morgenthau attributes the defeat of Russia in 1915, leading to her eventual political as well as military collapse, to the closing of the Dardanelles by Germany on Sept. 27, 1914, cutting off her resources from sales of wheat abroad, and preventing her Allies from sending her supplies and ammunition by the only really accessible route. See *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, pp. 105–111.

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fare, but that they had formed most interesting and intimate impressions of the conditions about them.

Of all my callers, however, I would say that the one who most differed from the others was Herbert Hoover. One day in the early part of the war, when his great mission for the relief of Belgium had brought him to France, his card was sent up to my office; a few minutes later he was ushered in. Taking a seat near my desk, after greeting me most pleasantly and hardly looking me in the face, he told me, in short, quick sentences, a story of fascinating interest. The privileged position which his mission had given him, coupled with the fact that our country was not only still a neutral, but actually representing German interests in hostile countries, gave him an entrée into the very inner circles of German military officialdom. Concentration in conversation upon the subject of his call—for there always seems with him to be a definite object—must impress one from the start. To think of his wasting time by making a merely social call during business hours would be something unimaginable; neither is there ever anything indirect in his manner, such as the exchange of comments about the weather and conditions in general, in acquainting you with the object of his call. He impresses you as some automatic machine perfectly adjusted in all its bearings, and capable of turning out a vast amount of work.

Particularly one thing which he told me that day remained fixed in my mind all through the war: "The war will result in a stalemate."[1] I was listening to the only man—at least the only American—who had been privileged to know first hand the mind of the representatives of German militarism as it came to him through chats in cafés, consultations as to his plans for relief, and I presume some social amenities. At that time, and indeed for nearly four years thereafter, a veritable Chinese wall shut out from the Allies all authoritative information as to the real thoughts which moved the German mind.

[1] Colonel Repington wrote in his Diary as late as Nov. 30, 1916: "Few, if any, people see the end of the war except by stalemate." See *The First World War*, Vol. I, p. 401.

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In properly assessing the values which should be attached to this declaration, one must primarily consider the period at which it was made. The three intensive years of warfare which followed would modify, I am sure, one's opinion as to the weight to be given it. I am sure, too, that the keen perception of Mr. Hoover compelled him, before many months after his statement to me, to change his opinion that the war would result in a stalemate. After the collapse of Russia, nothing prevented a German victory but the opportune—the necessary—entrance of the United States into the war on the side of the Allies.

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CHAPTER VII

THE STORY OF THE *SUSSEX*

ON the afternoon of the twenty-fifth day of March, 1916, occurred an incident which at once assumed the gravest importance in its bearing upon the war. It peculiarly concerned the Government of the United States, because it involved a very serious menace to the lives of American citizens. I refer to the case of the steamer *Sussex*. This was a small cross-Channel passenger boat, plying between Dieppe and Folkestone, which, on that afternoon, had been all but sunk by a torpedo from a German submarine. Even as it was, approximately one hundred and fifty people lost their lives, either directly from the explosion or else from the capsizing of lifeboats or jumping into the water in a panic of fear.

Many of my readers will remember this as one of the numerous incidents of the submarine warfare which for so long a time seriously threatened the ability of the Allied Powers to continue the war. But I am sure that few, if any, know the interesting manner in which the responsibility for this new horror was finally fixed. The story is replete with those elements with which a Conan Doyle might thrill his readers.

In some respects, the case of the *Sussex* presented features more atrocious in their character than those of the *Lusitania* or the *Arabic*.[1] The *Sussex* was well known to be employed exclusively in carrying passengers and mail back and forth across the English Channel; it carried no munitions of war, nor was it defended by even the smallest guns.

Nearly a year before, the world had been horrified by the sinking of the *Lusitania* with its great loss of human life. The death of more than one hundred Americans at that time

[1] The *Lusitania* was torpedoed May 7 and the *Arabic* August 19, 1915.

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had already done much to start the tide of war in America. This was followed, three months later, by the torpedoing of the *Arabic*, some forty-eight passengers being lost, including two more American lives sacrificed by this wickedly ruthless method of warfare, the very nature of which rendered it impossible to discriminate between women and children, and armed troops of war, as its victims.

Neither of these incidents proved sufficient to precipitate our country into the war. As yet, the sentiment at home seemed not ripe for it—most certainly not to the degree which, a year later, was attained with unanimity. But the *Sussex* case brought our Government measurably nearer to the brink of war. It served, too, the purpose, paradoxical as it may seem, of staying our participation in the war for another year. The latter result was due to the virile message of President Wilson, addressed to the Imperial Government of Germany, which voiced in unmistakable terms the determination to permit no longer such outrages involving American rights upon the high seas. Indeed, so important a bearing in the mind of Count Bernstorff, at the time Germany's Ambassador to the United States,[1] had this whole incident of the *Sussex* upon America's subsequent entrance into the war, that in his book *My Three Years in America*, he has written:[2]

"It is my firm conviction that had it not been for this ultimatum (President Wilson's Note of the 18th of April to the German Government), diplomatic relations would not have been broken off immediately, even in 1917. In the increased tension of the situation resulting from the exchange of Notes on the subject of the *Sussex*, I see, therefore, one of the immediate germs of the war with America."

No one was in a better position than this German diplomat to appreciate the gravity of a situation which the entire submarine method of warfare had created at Washington. And no one better than he understood the cataclysm toward which his country was hastening, through its "half-hearted conces-

[1] Ambassador at Washington 1908–17, now Chief German Delegate to the League of Nations.

[2] Chapter IX.

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sions," to use his own language, which his Government had from time to time been compelled to make. He has added: "In my opinion it was essential for us to strive for a complete understanding with America, if we were not prepared to carry on the submarine campaign without regard to consequences." In deploring the fact that no attention was paid to his suggestions in Berlin at the time of this incident, a fateful story is told of cross-currents at home preventing his Government from giving heed to the advice of one whose position at Washington, above all other diplomatic missions, rendered it most needful.

It will be recalled that to oppose the natural inference that the boat had been torpedoed, the claim had been made by the German Government that a sunken mine was the cause of the disaster. Unfortunate, indeed, it was for this contention that the *Sussex* did not actually sink and with her carry the evidence which was later to produce such an overwhelming refutation. As it was, she bore into port that day, amidst the débris in her shattered hulk, mute evidence which was soon to be as living words, telling of the instrument of her attempted destruction.

The first knowledge that came to me of this new disaster was through Mr. Fairbanks, our acting Consul at Dieppe. On March 25th he had telegraphed me:

Telegram from Consul Fairbanks to Ambassador Sharp.

Cross-channel steamer *Sussex* coming to Dieppe torpedoed four-thirty this afternoon, six maritime miles off Berck. Three hundred eighty-six passengers and fifty-five crew. Wireless help calls received for ten minutes. Torpedo boat has arrived on scene disaster. Further details lacking.

FAIRBANKS, Consular Agent.

Later, Mr. Fairbanks telephoned me that the *Sussex* had been towed to Boulogne, after two hundred and fifty passengers had been landed.[1] He had understood that between sixty

[1] Women, children, and wounded were landed at Boulogne by the French boat *Marie Thérèse*. The male passengers were taken to England on a British destroyer.

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and eighty passengers had been wounded or killed by explosion, but did not know the names of any of the American passengers. The rumours quickly flying about Paris that a number of Americans were on board, coupled with the definite information that the loss of life was considerable, created much anxiety among those who had friends or relatives expected back in France at about that time. The knowledge that Mr. Bliss, then Secretary, but later Counsellor of the Embassy, accompanied by Mrs. Bliss on their return from America, was expected to cross the Channel that day, gave a deep personal concern to all the Embassy staff. Fortunately, they had decided to take another route, and came over later in the week by way of Southampton.

It was soon definitely learned that Professor J. Mark Baldwin, together with Mrs. Baldwin and their daughter, had taken passage on the *Sussex*. My inability to hear from him for some little time after the disaster led me to believe that he was one of the victims. Additional reason for this belief was furnished by rather positive statements that he had been one of those last seen on the forward part of the ship when the explosion occurred. After vainly trying to get into communication with those near the scene of the disaster who might know definitely of Mr. Baldwin's fate, I was greatly relieved to receive the following letter from him:[1]

Professor James Mark Baldwin to Ambassador Sharp.

Sussex Hotel,
Wimereux
(Près Boulogne s/mer),
Sunday, March 26.

Dear Mr. Sharp:

I am writing to tell you that we were all rescued (wife, daughter and I) at midnight after the torpedoing of the

[1] For Professor Baldwin's detailed account of the *Sussex* outrage, see *Between Two Wars*, by James Mark Baldwin, Vol. I, Chapter XII. His evidence was particularly important, as he saw what appeared to be the conning-tower of a submarine, and he felt two distinct shocks, the first

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channel boat *Sussex*, and landed at Boulogne. Our daughter Elizabeth is very much bruised and stupefied but we hope that it is only contusion and shock. We are staying here while she is in the hospital for treatment. I shall be glad if you could reassure those of our friends who inquire about us.

There were two young Americans who crossed on the *New York* with my family and took the *Sussex*; both were standing with my daughter when the explosion tore away the fore part of the boat just beside them. Neither of the young men was seen afterwards—unless possibly in one of the small boats. I fear they are both lost. They are: a Mr. Crocker of Boston (Harvard) coming to drive an ambulance for the Norton-Harjes unit; I think it might be well to inform the Morgan firm.

The other is a Mr. Penfield, a Rhodes scholar at Oxford—a Princeton graduate. I do not know anything further of him.[1]

I should be grateful if you could send me some sort of a note to the military authorities here—it is in the war zone, you know—which would facilitate my passing between Paris and Boulogne, as I shall have to come and go if Elizabeth's stay in the hospital is prolonged. I have saved my own passports, American and French, but my wife and daughter have lost theirs in their handbags.

My wife joins me in kind messages to you all. She is still weak from the harrowing sights and fearful anxiety about Elizabeth but is otherwise well.

Yours sincerely,

J. MARK BALDWIN.

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from the blow of contact of the engine with the ship, and the second by the explosion of the torpedo. A mine could not have produced this double effect. For Mr. Sharp's reply to Mr. Baldwin's letter see *Between Two Wars*, Vol. II, p. 322.

[1] In a letter dated July 17, 1930, Professor Baldwin wrote to me: "Crocker was frightfully injured, much as my daughter Elizabeth was, and after years has recovered, I am told, completely. Penfield (now Dr. Wilder Penfield) escaped with a broken leg; he showed great bravery on the ship after his injury. He is now Professor in McGill University, Montreal, specializing I believe in brain surgery." W. D.

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While, providentially, all the Americans on board were saved from death—and there were upwards of a score of them —not all escaped injury. As may be gathered from Professor Baldwin's letter, his daughter was very seriously injured and for some time her life hung in the balance. She had received dangerous wounds in the head from flying fragments following the explosion, and remained unconscious and without the power of speech for many days. The story told me by Professor Baldwin upon his return to Paris, of his fears and his anxiety while watching over the inanimate body of his daughter lying at the bottom of one of the drifting life-boats, was most harrowing. Although predictions had been freely made that some day one of these cross-Channel passenger boats would be attacked by a submarine, yet the immunity thus far enjoyed by them seemed to have resulted in very little discouragement to travel. The fact that the schedule of daily trips had been changed, owing to the exigencies of the war, to passages on each alternate day, only seemed to crowd them to their limit. In fact, the *Sussex*, upon her fateful voyage, had a passenger list of nearly four hundred, exclusive of the crew, and including not only subjects of the Allied Powers, but neutrals as well.

Promptly upon receipt of the news from our Consul of the attack on the *Sussex*, I directed Lieutenant Bernard L. Smith, U.S. Marine Corps and Assistant Naval Attaché at the Embassy, Major Logan, doing special work for the War Department, and Mr. Hastings Morse, of the staff of the Embassy, to proceed at once to Boulogne and there gather all possible information as to the cause of the disaster. I also directed them to place their services at the disposal of any Americans whose distress the Embassy might alleviate. The French port authorities, through my request to the Government at Paris, were notified of their coming and instructed to extend to them any aid that might be needed to facilitate their investigation.

The *Sussex* had reached Boulogne at two o'clock in the afternoon of March 26; within twenty-four hours thereafter Major Logan and Lieutenant Smith had arrived on the

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scene. During their absence, additional reports came in to the Embassy giving further particulars as to the extent of the disaster. It was indeed a miracle that this little ship of scarcely fourteen hundred tons had remained afloat. Only the staunchness of her bulkheads, and particularly the calmness of the seas, prevented her sinking. Notwithstanding these favourable conditions, the danger was considerably increased from the fact that there was no other vessel in sight at the time the boat was attacked. Through an error in computing her location, report of which was sent by wireless immediately after the explosion, the relief vessels sent out to find the *Sussex* were unable to do so for many hours. The suspense of the surviving passengers on the wrecked boat can well be imagined. Only a bulkhead,[1] pulsating with every motion of the ship, separated them from death by drowning like so many rats in a trap.

Mr. Edward Marshall, a well-known newspaper correspondent, and a hero of the Spanish-American War, who had left a leg on the Cuban battlefield, was one of the American passengers on that eventful voyage. Visiting Paris some weeks later—for he was one of those who had been landed on the English coast instead of at Boulogne—he told me a thrilling story of his experiences. At different times during these hours of suspense, in the blackness of the night, he and some of his fellow-passengers would inspect the bulkhead, pressing their ears to its sides that they might more accurately gauge the probability of its withstanding the strain. He told me that, in the little dining-room of the boat, shortly after the diners had left the room, a gentleman with whom he had been conversing sat at the table just opposite him. All at once, with great suddenness as a result of the explosion of the torpedo, the chair in which this man was sitting was thrown upward, and, carrying him with it, struck the ceiling with tremendous force. He was instantly killed, while Mr. Marshall, sitting but a few feet away, was unharmed.

Just outside of the intervening bulkhead, located at the

[1] The bulkhead was reinforced by a large number of mail-bags, which increased its resistance.

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forward end of the ship, a scene of horrible carnage was everywhere manifest. Nearly thirty feet of the bow of the boat, extending well back to the Captain's bridge, had been blown off; all the superstructure had been destroyed. Just what toll of human lives was taken, due directly to the explosion, will never be known. From the stories of those who saw their fellow-passengers standing on the deck, which an instant later was so completely wrecked, the number must have been large. But the greatest loss of life resulted from the panic which seized many of the passengers after the explosion. Seemingly beside themselves, men and women rushed frantically to the side of the ship. Before any boats could be lowered, they leaped out into the water, only to drown in a few moments, in plain view of those who remained on deck. In one case a mother threw her infant child overboard and followed it into the water herself.

Among those unfortunates who lost their lives in this manner were Señor Enrique Granados, the noted Spanish composer, and his wife, who had just returned from America after seeing the successful presentation of one of his operas. Apparently unable to swim after they found themselves in the water, they were seen to sink out of sight clasped in each other's arms.

The mishaps in lowering the life-boats, so common in accidents at sea, resulted also in the capsizing of a number of them. The extent of the loss of life from this cause was considerable. It was all the more deplorable, from the fact that none of these persons would have been drowned had they remained on the steamer, which, on the following day, was towed safely, though in a seriously damaged condition, into port at Boulogne. Indeed, all of those who had taken to the life-boats, after spending a considerable time on the water unable to make any headway, and observing that the *Sussex* was not sinking, rowed back to re-embark on her.

Fourteen of the American survivors—there were twenty-six in all—upon landing at Boulogne, came directly to Paris. A number of them lost no time in coming to the Embassy to tell their stories; others I sent for. I asked Mr. Frazier,

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First Secretary of the Embassy, to take their depositions; at the same time I cabled Washington the salient points of their testimony. They represented a variety of vocations, a majority being on one kind or another of business mission.

In my experience in the early days of my career as a trial lawyer, I had never examined any witnesses whose veracity I would place on a higher plane than that of those who gave their story to the Embassy. Straightforward, free from prejudice, with a manifest desire to be accurate in all their statements, at the end of forty-eight hours after their reaching Paris, they gave me such a complete story of all that occurred during those eventful moments, that scarcely a detail was lacking. Coming from sources so widely different in opportunity to see all that took place on the ship, both before and after the explosion, each piece of evidence fitted into the whole in such a way as to leave no contradiction or inconsistency. Truth never contradicts itself, and they told the truth. It was only when some of these witnesses commenced to express to me their opinion as to what caused the explosion, that there was any divergence in their views.

Naturally, most of those who gave their testimony could only hazard a guess as to the cause. However, with daily reports of many boats being destroyed by submarines, and with some degree of frequency by mines, there was a general agreement that one or the other of these agencies was the cause of the disaster.

The theory that it was caused by the explosion of a mine was later clearly demonstrated to have been without any possibility of support. The investigations which I set on foot established that the tides at the time and place where the *Sussex* was torpedoed were twenty-five feet above the level at which contact with a mine might be made. The evidence showed that the *Sussex* was drawing about eleven feet of water when she left Folkestone. Thus was furnished irrefutable proof that the explosion could not have been caused by contact with a fixed mine. After detailing with great exactness the location of the ship in latitude and longitude when it was struck, Commander Sayles and Lieutenant Smith reported:

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"At mean low water at this position there is a depth of thirty-one metres. The official time of the accident was one hour and thirteen minutes after high water. The height of the tide at this time was about 7.60 metres. The depth of the water at the time of the accident was therefore 38.60 metres. The maximum draft of the ship at the time of the accident is reported to have been 3.20 metres. From the foregoing facts the assumption may be drawn that the *Sussex* did not come in contact with an anchored mine."

There were three witnesses who positively declared that but an instant before the explosion they had seen the well-defined wake of a torpedo rushing toward the ship at an angle in the direction of her course. One of these, a gentleman of unimpeachable character, exclaimed to his wife at that moment: "Look, here comes a torpedo!" A second later it had struck the forward part of the ship. There was another person whose eyes were also scanning the smooth waters at that moment, and who saw the coming of the deadly missile. It was Captain Mouffet. With a promptness which undoubtedly saved the boat from being struck at a vital point, he gave orders to change her course so as to cause the torpedo to strike at such an angle as to do the least possible damage. The engine was also immediately stopped.

Much of the evidence which I have thus related came from witnesses of the catastrophe with whom I had personally talked. But confirmatory of the cause of the disaster as was the account given by these witnesses, there was in existence other evidence which was to be as convincing as it was immutable in character. Depending not upon the possibility of the intervening frailties of memory, prejudice, or lack of truthfulness, it fixed unerringly the responsibility for the crime. It did more, for it exerted a powerful influence upon the conduct of submarine warfare for many months to follow.

With most commendable promptness, Major Logan and Lieutenant Smith had commenced a thorough inspection of the disabled hulk, which had been beached on the sands at Boulogne. In keeping with the custom of the French author-

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ities, whether of high or low degree, in responding to all of my requests, every facility was afforded for this purpose. Owing to the celerity with which action in the matter had been taken, no work had been commenced for clearing away the débris, which still covered, to a depth of several feet, the larger portion of what remained of the shattered bow of the ship.

Gruesome enough became this task. In delving into the mass of wreckage at the very outset was found the dismembered body of one of the victims of the explosion. A portion of a man's leg with a shoe on the foot had been uncovered in the presence of the two officers. A further search was soon rewarded with the finding of various parts, fragments of metal, which, by their peculiar composition and shape, differentiated them from anything that might have belonged to the construction of the ship. Some of these pieces were found firmly imbedded in timbers, showing the tremendous force with which they had been driven. After an exhaustive search in this closely-packed mass of wreckage, fifteen of such fragments were collected by Major Logan and Lieutenant Smith; to these was added a piece found by one of the officers of the port.[1]

With what they quickly divined to be fragments of a torpedo, they returned to Paris to report their findings to me. Upon their arrival, they at once came to my office and laid these fragments before me on my desk. At such a moment it might well seem as though the hands of those whose lives had been sacrificed in this awful tragedy were held out, pointing to this mute accusing evidence as proof of the instrument of their murder. With the greatest interest, I examined the torn and jagged pieces. Two of them—the broken and half-fused screw-heads, which had been a part of the construction of either the mine or the torpedo responsible for the disaster—instantly riveted my attention. I had observed upon one of the four faces of the head of each one of the bolts

[1] Another fragment of the torpedo, bearing a part of one of the screw-heads by which its German origin was proved, was found by Captain Mouffet and given to Professor Baldwin, who still has it in his possession.

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the capital letter "K," and on the opposite side a number. I turned to the officers, and pointing to these bolts, said:

"In these two fragments you will find the tell-tale evidence which will show the cause of the explosion. Where can we make comparison with other torpedoes of admitted German, French, and English manufacture?"

Through the Minister of the Marine, I learned that every known variety of torpedoes could be found at the Naval Station at Toulon on the Mediterranean.

Arranging for Commander William R. Sayles, the Naval Attaché of the Embassy, to accompany Major Logan and Lieutenant Smith, I instructed them to proceed that night to Toulon. They carried with them all the fragments which they had found on the *Sussex*, that these might be compared with disassembled parts of the different kinds of torpedoes. The customary courtesies to these officers being assured by those in charge of the Naval Station at Toulon, a stay of only a day enabled them to return with startlingly corroborative evidence of the fact that it was a torpedo of German make that had struck the *Sussex*. They brought with them several specimens of screw-heads which they found in the torpedoes of German, French, and English manufacture. On making an examination of these specimens, I saw that while neither of the two latter makes had any letters or numbers upon them, those taken from the German torpedo had the letter "K" and also a number. Moreover, those from the German torpedo were identical in size and shape with those found on the *Sussex*.[1]

Lieutenant Smith had already drawn a representation of the "war head"—so-called—of the German torpedo as it existed in the specimen found at Toulon. Ingeniously, he had represented in their proper places, in red ink, all of the sixteen fragments found in the débris of the *Sussex*. This drawing,

[1] "There can be no doubt of the *Sussex* having been torpedoed by a German vessel. The American Naval Attaché has pieces of the torpedo, and the head screws (which are marked K for 'Kopf') are undoubtedly torpedo head screws and not of the kind used in the British or the French Navy." *The Diary of Lord Bertie*, April 2, 1916.

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representing as it did a reconstructed torpedo, was a feature not lacking in dramatic qualities. It was worthy of being recorded in the investigation, carried on at a time when ingenious stories were being fabricated to show that no torpedo fired by a submarine could have caused the wreck of the *Sussex*. It was this display of ingenuity and ability of Lieutenant Smith, coupled with his most efficient record, which caused me to recommend, in a personal telegram to Secretary Daniels, his employment in Washington in a larger and more helpful sphere of usefulness. Upon his return to America after our entrance into the war, his services became of the greatest use to our Navy.

While keeping the State Department informed of the development of the investigation, including the sending of copious extracts from the testimony of the passengers, I yet realized the importance of fixing, beyond doubt or possible dispute, the cause of the disaster. The need for action, when events of such international concern were moving so swiftly, was too great to await specific instructions from Washington. The initiative must be mine. In carrying out this purpose, I directed these same officers of my staff to proceed to Portsmouth, England, where were to be found newer types of torpedoes of German make, as well as French and English. Upon their arrival, they received every courtesy from the English naval officers, which enabled them to carry on their investigation. As at Toulon, so here they were permitted to examine, not only the parts of the mines of the different Navies, but also the torpedoes. They also obtained abundant corroborative evidence that the fragments which they had found on board the *Sussex* came from a German torpedo and formed no part of the construction of a mine.

A curious aid in arriving at this conclusion came to them in a most unexpected manner. Armed with letters of credentials, they secured permission from the Director of Torpedoes of the Royal Navy to visit H.M.S. *Vernon*. There they found drawings and descriptions of a German torpedo taken from the *Emden*.

It will be recalled that this cruiser, before its destruction

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by the British, had a most remarkable career. The boldness and resourcefulness of her captain in his piratical exploits had challenged the admiration of even his foes.[1] Emphasizing the regard in which this captain and his cruiser were held, we have the statement of no less a personage than General Ludendorff, in his book reciting his part in the war, that on one occasion, when he went to consult with the Kaiser, he found, as one of the birthday presents scattered about the room, a fine picture of the *Emden*.[2] Oddly enough, the General's visit to the Emperor, that day, was to arrive at the momentous decision by which the German Government was to repudiate all the pledges that had been made as the result of President Wilson's protest over the attempted sinking of the *Sussex*.

From these drawings and the other proofs at hand, the officers were again able to identify positively every fragment which they had carried with them as having belonged to a German torpedo. A report of their Portsmouth findings was at once given to my esteemed colleague, the late Honourable Walter Hines Page, then American Ambassador at London.[3] Upon receiving full written reports from the officers whom I had dispatched to Portsmouth, I immediately cabled to the State Department their substance. I cannot too strongly commend either their zeal in carrying out their task, or the thoroughness with which it was accomplished. Whenever their conclusions were not entirely warranted by the facts, they were so labelled.

The State Department at Washington was equally determined to take nothing for granted that had not been first demonstrated as quite axiomatic. Thus far, the incident had differed but very little from securing evidence upon which a criminal indictment might be predicated. The crime charged

[1] A generous tribute has been paid to the exploits of the *Emden* and other German cruisers at that period in the works of Paul Chack, Librarian of the French Ministry of Marine. See notably *On se Bat sur Mer* and (in collaboration with Claude Farrère) *Combats et Batailles sur Mer*.

[2] Vol. I, "The Situation at the End of 1918," Division IV.

[3] See *The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page*, by Burton J. Hendrick, Vol. II., Chapter XVIII.

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was, in effect, the deliberate killing in broad daylight, without the slightest warning, of approximately one hundred and fifty innocent people.

Who was responsible for the crime? Neutral as well as belligerent Powers were vitally interested in the verdict. Subjects and citizens of many nationalities had lost their lives or been grievously injured. The very nature of the crime had shown that henceforth no ship sailing the high seas would be immune from a deliberate attempt to sink her. But unless the proofs at hand were sufficient to point out beyond a reasonable doubt—nay more, even to a certainty—the guilt of the party charged, the American Government could not lend itself to preferring such a charge against any of the belligerent Powers. The extreme gravity of the case made both my responsibility, and that of the Government at Washington, very great.

Consistent with that wisdom which had guided the State Department at Washington in its consideration of the grave questions involved in the war, there was to be no mistake made in dealing with the case of the *Sussex*. If patience in studying such problems had been one of the dominant characteristics of its attitude, that of being just in its dealings with the German Government had been equally so. There had not been lacking those Americans, both at home and abroad, who had already shown marked dissatisfaction over the former quality and a lack of sympathy with the latter. By them it was believed that, in view of the atrocities already committed by the submarine—so inhuman in their very nature—patience had ceased to be a virtue. As for being just, in their opinion, the perpetrators had put themselves outside of the pale. But at such a time an unfounded accusation would strengthen the hand of the accused; it would correspondingly weaken the confidence placed in those who were at war with them. Under such circumstances, our Government must have a case supported by facts, free from any flaw or doubt.

It was unquestionably with such a purpose in mind that, after substantially all of the evidence to which I have referred had been telegraphed to him, Secretary Lansing, in a telegram

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to me under date of the twelfth of April, posed four questions. Their conciseness was only equalled by the insight displayed as to the vital elements in the case. The Secretary wanted to know: first, how long a time had elapsed after the *Sussex* was beached at Boulogne before Major Logan and Lieutenant Smith made their examination; second, what opportunity had other persons previously to visit the ship or to place fragments of metal among the débris; third, was there, in the opinion of the officers making the examination, a likelihood of an imposition being practised in placing the pieces of metal where found; fourth, were the screw-heads, to which I have before referred as in my judgment constituting proofs, damaged by the explosion, and in what manner?

The evidence in my possession, fortunately, was so conclusive in answer to all these questions as to leave no possibility of doubt.

In my cabled reply, I informed Mr. Lansing that these representatives of the Embassy had reached Boulogne on the day after the arrival of the *Sussex*, the examination continuing over the following three days; that while it was true that the vessel had been accessible to the crew and certain authorized persons, yet the report of the examining officers showed that the likelihood of imposition being practised in the placing of the fragments of metal on the hulk was quite impossible.

Quoting from the reports of Logan and Smith—for the pouch bearing them had not yet reached Washington—I set out the fact that the most convincing evidence that such pieces of metal had not been placed for the purpose of deception, was that both officers were present during the clearing out of the undisturbed mass of débris among which the fragments had been found. This work had been commenced with the double purpose of cleaning the ship and searching for the dead that might yet be there. I pointed out in my telegram that this débris on the saloon deck was some three or four feet deep, closely packed by the action of the water when the ship was afloat. The whole mass bore convincing indications of not having been touched since the explosion. Some of the metal fragments were uncovered from below the débris in the officers' presence; their position was such that

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they could not have been placed there after the explosion had occurred. A number of the pieces were found so firmly imbedded in the wood as to show the impossibility of having been purposely placed there. But it was again the screw-heads that furnished unmistakable evidence refuting any thought of deception. The report of the officers showed that they bore every evidence of having been in an extremely heavy explosion, which caused the distinct fusing of portions of the metal. This force had been sufficient to bend them slightly and to give the appearance also of their having been twisted.

"It would be practically impossible," their report said, "to fake artificially all of these injuries to a screw bolt of this character." To the liberal quotations made from the officers' reports, I added in my telegram that it was my own conviction that they had not been mistaken in their conclusions. I also informed the Department that I was forwarding in the outgoing pouch all of the fragments, together with screw bolts from German, French, and English torpedoes, for the purpose of comparison. But I knew that in all probability drastic action would be taken before their arrival. The temper of those critical times would not brook the delay of ocean mails.

Thus far I had, in the main, cabled to the Department the evidence supplied to me by those whom I had directed to make the investigations. In addition, I had briefly quoted by cable the important features of the testimony of fourteen witnesses, all American passengers on the *Sussex*, who had given their sworn evidence before the Embassy. I had, at the same time, taken occasion to point out the importance of some of the evidence thus adduced. But I felt the portent of an important decision which might be taken at any moment by our Government. Three weeks had elapsed since the *Sussex* had been attacked. During that time indignation had continued to grow. The lives of too many people of too many nationalities had been sacrificed; those of neutral countries had been no more respected than those of hostile belligerents. The Allied Press, eagerly watching every act of the Washington Government as possessing the utmost

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significance, had not minimized the importance of this new horror. The alibi put out by the German Government was as weak as it was audacious. But no one had actually seen a German submarine in that vicinity at that time. The identity of the criminal seemed to be as immune from discovery as that of an assassin who, from outside, in the blackness of the night, had fired through the window of a lighted room. The world believed in the guilt of Germany, but it had not been proven.

The State Department was more than three thousand miles away from the scene of action. The advantage, which one gets from seeing the witnesses face to face was wholly lacking. Even their sworn statements in their entirety had not yet reached the Department; nor could the fragments be personally inspected at Washington for some time to come. Should I not now, at this crucial moment, cable my personal opinion of the whole case? I had seen and talked with the witnesses, I was in a position to judge of the reliability of the opinions of the Attachés whom I had sent out from the Embassy; I had personally inspected the metal fragments; and I was, in fact, from my position, in the very centre of the atmosphere which surrounded the entire case. The nature of the questions asked by Mr. Lansing unmistakably indicated the need of an expression of my personal views. It was my duty to give them. In the discharge of the duties of my mission I had not before faced a responsibility so grave. I felt that war with Germany was very near and that my words to our Government would probably precipitate it. The sequel showed that only her prompt acknowledgment of guilt and promise to change her policy of submarine warfare prevented it. Within forty-eight hours after I had cabled to the Department the answer to which I have referred, I sent to Mr. Lansing, at 6 p.m. on April 15, the following telegram:

Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

For Mr. Lansing:

In view of the nature of the inquiries contained in your No. —— I supplement my No. —— by briefly giving for your

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information my impressions of the reliability of the evidence which has been sent over by me concerning the case of the *Sussex*. It is my belief, based upon having personally interrogated twelve of the fourteen American witnesses whose depositions have been sent to the Department, that their statements can be depended upon as being absolutely truthful. These witnesses are evidently of good character and of better than the average intelligence. The positive statements of Mrs. Warren and Mr. Samuel Bemis, corroborated by that of Mr. Henry S. Beer, made at St. Gall, to the effect that they saw the wake of a torpedo coming toward the ship, almost immediately followed by the explosion, fully convinced me as to the cause. The subsequent finding of the metal fragments in the débris of the wreckage of the *Sussex* by Smith and Logan, later compared with parts of torpedoes, and so identified, furnishes a strong additional confirmation of this opinion. Two of these fragments, consisting of screw bolts, are marked on different faces of their heads with a number and the capital letter "K," and are so remarkably similar in that respect to those taken by Sayles and Smith at Toulon and Portsmouth from torpedoes of known German make, and with which I made comparison, that there is no doubt in my mind as to their common origin.

SHARP.

I was not mistaken in my belief that action of far-reaching importance on the part of the Government at Washington was imminent. On April 19, within forty-eight hours after the receipt and deciphering of my telegram, President Wilson went before Congress and, at a joint session of the Senate and House of Representatives, delivered an address reviewing the submarine controversy in such a manner as to cause the world to sit up and rub its eyes. Even in the midst of big happenings of almost daily occurrence, I doubt if any declaration made during the war up to that time—and certainly not by our own Government—had created such a sensation as the address of the President on that afternoon. Its substance was at once cabled to the American Embassies and Legations throughout Europe. The message not only reflected the

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attitude of the Washington Government at that time upon the whole question of the submarine warfare, but most certainly had a determining influence in immediately modifying Germany's previous ruthless method of conducting it.

What a different story might have been written of the great war, had the German Government consistently and faithfully adhered to its promises then made! How freighted with disaster was its repudiation a year later, in such a manner as to make the continuance of peaceful relations between the two countries impossible!

The President's words, as splendid as they were bold, electrified all Europe. Their importance may be understood when it is known that the Allies had already come to realize that the help of the United States was necessary to win the war. To the Central Powers it came as a warning which might well cause even a von Tirpitz to "Stop, look, and listen." What a crushing refutation and brushing aside of the camouflage defence of an alibi which, only a few days before, the German Government had endeavoured to use in its Note replying to the Government at Washington, in which a report was made on the torpedoing of the *Sussex*! The alibi served instead, in a singular manner, to form a new link in the chain of evidence which had been so strongly forged by the facts which I have related.

It was asserted in the German Note of April 10, delivered to Ambassador Gerard, that, according to a statement made by the commanding officer of one of the submarines, he had torpedoed a boat on the very day and hour stated and in the very same locality where the *Sussex* had been attacked. In describing the result of the explosion, it was even mentioned that the whole of the ship forward to the bridge broke away. Down to this point, it tallied with the time, place, and manner of the disaster which had overtaken the *Sussex*.[1]

[1] Ambassador Gerard mentions the "overwhelming evidence" contained in this report which was rendered "absolutely conclusive by the various German documents"; the Note addressed to Germany therefore clearly defined the issue. See *My Four Years in Germany*, Chapters XII and XIX; and *Face to Face with Kaiserism*, Chapter VII.

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In the instance, however, referred to in the German Note, it was claimed that there had been a great explosion when the boat was struck, which indicated that it was in all probability a mine-layer. The Captain of the submarine was led to this conviction, to use the words of the German Note, by the flush deck of the ship; by the shape of the stern which sloped outwards; by the paintwork which was that of a ship of war; by the high speed of about eighteen knots which the ship developed. It was pointed out also as an additional reason that the ship was not traversing another course from that usually taken by merchant shipping. "Consequently," it said, "the submarine fired a torpedo at 3.55 p.m. Central European time, one and one-half knots south-east of the Bull Rock." It was added that "the unusually heavy explosion leaves no doubt that there were large stores of ammunition on board." Then followed what in the light of the truth must appear as highly humorous, a story to the effect that the German Captain having prepared a sketch of the ship which he attacked and comparison being made with pictures of the *Sussex*, which had later appeared in the London *Daily Graphic*, it was clearly seen that there was no similarity whatever between the two boats. It was further added that no other attack was made by the German submarine upon any boat plying between Folkestone and Dieppe at the time of the *Sussex* incident. Then the sage conclusion was drawn that "from this the German Government are obliged to assume that the sinking of the *Sussex* is to be set down to other causes than attack by a German submarine."

But the evidence in my possession enabled me to send quite another story to our Government. When the facts I had gathered were laid before the German Government, and only then, did it throw up its hands. Surely never before was such a cock and bull story, which only the tragedy involved saved from being grotesquely humorous, more thoroughly discredited.

I might add that so little of the real truth had dawned upon the mind of the German Government as to the case which had already been made out against it by the Paris

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Embassy, that in commenting upon this incident Ambassador Gerard has stated that before the delivery of this Note of the tenth of April, he had been assured again and again that the *Sussex* had not been torpedoed by a German submarine.[1]

The Paris Press joined in enthusiastic praise of the President's message; in fact, it was quite generally regarded as the throwing down of the gauntlet. Germany must yield or be compelled to face a new and powerful opponent. I have sometimes wondered whether at that particular time the answer of Germany gave the most of disappointment or of satisfaction to the Allied Powers. If she had answered defiantly, declining to modify her methods of submarine warfare, America, by the sheer force of such a situation, would have become almost automatically an active belligerent on the side of the Allies—a thing which, despite assertions to the contrary emanating from time to time from some of their political leaders, others wished most to happen.

The prompt assurance of the German Government to respect thereafter, under certain conditions, the rights of American citizens and American property on the seas, was soon given as the result of the firm attitude shown by President Wilson. An acute crisis had been passed. On May 4, Mr. Gerard at Berlin was given a Note by the Imperial Government, which, though seeking justification, and particularly charging Great Britain with violation of international law and with commencing this practice, concluded, however, with the statement that it had notified the Government of the United States that the German naval forces had received in substance the following orders:

"In accordance with the general principles of visit and search and destruction of merchant vessels recognized by international law, such vessels, both within and without the area declared as the naval war zone, shall not be sunk without warning and without saving human lives, unless these ships attempt to escape or offer resistance."

Even in thus yielding to the contention of our Government, the Note of the German Government was most ambiguous in

[1] *My Four Years in Germany*, Chapter XII.

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its reply as to what conditions might cause a change in its policy. Indeed, its terms were so uncertain that the Department of State, in a Note under date of May 8, after having stated that it would rely upon the scrupulous execution of the promise of Germany thus to alter henceforth its submarine policy, yet felt constrained to say: "In order, however, to avoid any possible misunderstanding, the Government of the United States notifies the Imperial Government that it cannot for a moment entertain, much less discuss, a suggestion that respect by German naval authorities for the rights of citizens of the United States upon the high seas should in any way or in the slightest degree be made contingent upon the conduct of any other Government affecting the rights of neutrals and non-combatants. Responsibility in such matters is single, not joint; absolute, not relative."

At the request of the Department, I repeated, by telegram, the substance of this Note to our Embassies and Legations at Rome, Madrid, Berne, Lisbon, and Athens.

While serious losses by submarines continued, there was, nevertheless, as a result of this action a greater sense of security upon the part, at least, of neutral vessels. It would seem to be more than a coincidence that, while during the nine months following this promise by Germany and until its repudiation, neutral Norway lost but 215 ships, yet for the same period immediately following the declaration of a ruthless policy on the part of Germany, 343 of her ships had been sunk by submarine attacks. In so far as American interests were concerned, there was no serious breach of the pledge made to our Government as a result of the *Sussex* remonstrance, until the German Government in its declaration of January 31, 1917, repudiated all its pledges covering the conduct of its submarine warfare. But during that intervening time, the tenseness which had been created by this incident was such as to forecast the consequences which ultimately followed.[1] The

[1] General von Falkenhayn, German Minister of War at the outbreak of the War, who replaced General von Moltke as Chief of the General Staff in September, 1914, and until August, 1916, when after Verdun he was replaced by General von Hindenburg, considered that the American

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submarine, though its methods of operation had been placed under certain restraint, became more and more an outlaw to civilized warfare, if warfare is ever civilized.

Note concerning the *Sussex* rendered war inevitable, and the submarine campaign should therefore have been intensified immediately. But since much time was lost in hesitation owing to the conciliatory attitude taken by the German Government, it was as well to wait until the next year for war, since no important result could have been attained until the autumn. See Eric von Falkenhayn, *Le Commandement Suprême de l'Armée allemande 1914–1916*, French translation with an introduction by General A. Niessel, pp. 170–171.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE YEAR OF VERDUN

THE name of Verdun, through the story of the sacrifices of its heroic defenders, has already become written in large letters in the history of the war. It has indeed been the destiny of this famous fortress, standing guard over the marches of eastern France, to mark more than one era in her annals. Was it not here that the Treaty was signed in 843 dividing the Carolingian Empire? Because not only of its strategic importance, but of the prestige attaching to it as being well nigh impregnable, Verdun had already stood no less than nine sieges since Attila withdrew from it in 450, when the German General Staff decided to make it the central point of its 1916 campaign.

Doubtless more was sought after by the Germans than strategic advantages alone,[1] great as must have been their desire to prevent the French Spring offensive, which General Joffre had had in preparation since early in December, 1915, and about which he had conferred with the British and Russian staffs for the purpose of effecting concerted movements.[2] Other considerations of a different order were of

[1] In his Christmas, 1915, Report to Kaiser Wilhelm, General von Falkenhayn, Chief of the German General Staff, examined the situation on the various fronts, giving his reasons for concluding that much could not be effected at that juncture in the East or in the Balkans or against Italy or against the English by land; wherefore the effort must bear against Verdun and Belfort, and mainly against the first-named fortress, France having, in his opinion, "nearly reached the limit of her military effort in an admirable spirit of devotion." See *Le Commandement Suprême de l'Armée allemande 1914–1916*, Eric von Falkenhayn, French translation with introduction by General A. Niessel, pp. 161–169.

[2] Held at Chantilly, December 5–8, 1915. This was the first Allied Conference to establish concerted movements, immediately after General Joffre had been appointed, by a Decree dated December 2, Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies on all questions relative to the manage-

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almost equal importance. The German home morale was avowedly beginning to weaken under the protracted strain of a war which, the people had been assured from the highest sources, could be of but short duration. Furthermore, a signal success was needed to restore the military reputation and the general popularity of the Crown Prince, which were considered as necessary features of his position, and which had been affected by his reverses in Eastern France in 1914 and in the Argonne in 1915.[1] Finally, both Grecian and Roumanian neutrality hung in the balance,[2] and Italy, already at war with Austria, was rumoured to be tending towards a complete collaboration with the Allies.[3] It therefore behoved the Central Powers to achieve a swift and crushing victory which, if not an immediate death-blow to the Allied cause, would nevertheless assert before the world the strength of Germany, and serve as warning for any who might be rash enough to stand out against her will.

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ment of the war and the general utilization of the forces of the Coalition. The Chantilly Conference was attended by Joffre, French, Jilinski, Porro, Wiellemans, and Stephanovitch, respectively for France, England, Russia, Italy, Belgium, and Serbia. See Victor Giraud, *Histoire de la Grande Guerre*, p. 361.

[1] The German Crown Prince has declared in his Memoirs that the Verdun offensive was not an initiative of his but was forced upon him by his advisers against his judgment, a point of view which is accepted by Mr. Winston Churchill. See *The World Crisis 1916–18*, Part I, Chapter IV.

[2] M. C. Diamandy, Roumanian Minister to Russia February 1914 to 1918, and Minister to France 1925–1930, has explained that the October 13, 1883, Treaty between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Roumania being a purely defensive one, Article II entering into application for armed intervention only if either Roumania or Austria-Hungary was the victim of an "unprovoked aggression," the position of Roumania was similar to that of Italy, so that her neutral attitude was in keeping with Italy's. It was therefore natural that Italy's entrance into the war should bring about a modification in Roumania's attitude. See C. Diamandy, *Ma Mission en Russie 1914–1918*, in *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, Feb. 15, 1929.

[3] The German Crown Prince has written that the "alleged neutrality" of Italy had disappointed him all the more since "the King, on the occasion of my last visit, had again assured me that in the event of a war Italy would in any case stand at the side of Germany." *Souvenirs de Guerre du Kronprinz* (Paris 1923), p. 22.

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The beginning of the year had been tranquil in Paris, save for activities in the air. While the submarine situation preoccupied the world, and certain apprehensions were felt about the Balkans and the Eastern Front, there was no advance warning of the magnitude as well as the imminence of the military events now about to occur on the Western Front.

Colonel House had again visited Paris, continuing his efforts of the previous year when I had written concerning him to President Wilson:

"The letter given to Colonel House in helping his noble mission abroad was admirable and will most assuredly bear fruit. While as might be expected none of the nations engaged in the war may at this time think it prudent to let it become known that it is willing to give encouragement to such a plan, yet I am convinced the message is opportune.

"In no better manner could the message be imparted to them, that there might be a way out of these awful conditions which involve such a horrible destruction of life and waste of resources. In my judgment, great good will grow out of the possession of that knowledge thus early communicated. The great respect which the nations engaged in the war have for the power and influence of the United States—and I must believe for its entire sincerity in its advocacy of peace—will command a more thoughtful and therefore a more hopeful consideration than may appear on the surface. I am glad to know that you have taken this step, and through such an efficient medium as I believe Colonel House to be."[1]

The attack upon Verdun on February 21 came after a

[1] Letter dated April 15, 1915. For Colonel House's peace conversations in the winter of 1915–16, having as object to call a Conference to end the war with the proviso America would enter the war on the side of the Allies if the Conference failed, see *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House* arranged by Charles Seymour, Vol. II.

A Memorandum of Ambassador Page's and a letter from him to the Secretary of State, January 15, 1915, record a conversation with Marshal French, who said Germany's peace proposals at that time were insufficient, as they consisted only of the restoration of Belgium, but the situation might change if she offered to restore Alsace and Lorraine to France and to give Constantinople to Russia. See *The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page*, Vol. I, Chapter XIII, and Vol. III, Chapter VII.

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preparatory bombardment of only a few hours. That some intimation of what was impending had reached the French General Staff is evident, since General Joffre had had time to order the evacuation of most of the civilians.[1] Nevertheless there had been no time to organize an adequate defence against an onslaught of such gigantic proportions as now took place.[2]

All honour to those who held out against the initial charges, General de Langle de Cary who had been in command for only a few weeks, and gallant Colonel Driant, and the men who withstood the first severe shocks until the arrival of General de Castelnau, and then of General Pétain, allowed the first phase of the battle to end in an at least partial check after, however, Fort Douaumont had fallen into German hands.

That was early in March; and the second attack, not on the right bank of the Meuse alone but on both banks, came swiftly after, March 6 to 11, allowing certain further points to be gained by the enemy.

It was, however, only in the course of the third phase of

[1] An entry in Lord Bertie's Diary, dated February 14, 1916, reads: "Robertson has been at Chantilly (*i.e.* French G.H.Q.) to-day conferring with the Staff there. A big German attack is expected between Verdun and Rheims, Mackensen's army is being hurried back from Serbia to the French frontier."

Supplies of all sorts were rushed up in utmost haste: "On February 18, there were in the Verdun region only ten automobile groups—whereas there should have been 45. Within a week, 51 had been brought together, in addition to 3,500 *camions*." Victor Giraud, *Histoire de la Grande Guerre*, p. 327.

[2] A Note of Marshal Joffre's estimated as follows the shells fired by the artillery of the Second French Army at Verdun: 10,300,000 of 75 millimetres, 1,200,000 of 80 to 105 millimetres, 2,600,000 big calibre (Giraud, p. 355).

Whereas several million shells of a calibre larger than 75 were fired by the Germans from 2,000 cannon during the nine hours of the terrific preparatory bombardment on February 21, 1916, the recorded figures for the siege of Verdun in the Franco-Prussian War are that 2,000 shells were fired on August 24, 1870; between 1,000 and 1,200 shells were fired on September 26; and between 20,000 and 25,000 during the three days October 13 to 15, 1870.

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the Verdun battle, the siege war which was protracted from the Spring until August 1, by which time General Nivelle was in command brilliantly seconded by General Mangin with the 5th Division, that Vaux was captured. But strategists asserted that so long as Souville held out, there was good hope to save Verdun.

Ambassador Sharp to the Secretary of State.

Paris, *March* 17, 1916.

My dear Mr. Secretary,

As I cabled you, I cannot believe that the Germans will succeed in taking Verdun, or, in fact, in making any material progress at any point along the line, though, of course, anything is possible in this war.

As a matter of fact, I have refrained in the past from giving to the Department my personal view of the war situation, not only because the American press contains much more war news than we get here, but also for the reason that, ever since the German retreat from the battlefields of the Marne to a line of trenches which have remained nearly stationary for more than eighteen months along a front of about 250 miles, there has never appeared to me any imminency of a break-through in those lines, or any material advance by the forces of either side.[1]

Modern warfare, by which aircraft instantly communicate to each of the belligerents the movements of the other, and the trench way of fighting, are, I believe, entirely responsible for this unique situation. Added to this is the fact that probably no war in history has furnished such an example where the contending forces have been so evenly matched in resources and prowess. Unless the unexpected happens in

[1] "The Crown Prince did not feel comfortable about the attack at Verdun in 1916. He thought that it would be wiser to finish first with Russia in the East . . . Falkenhayn insisted on his plan . . . The Crown Prince, shocked and stricken by the butchery and opposed to the operation, continuously endeavoured to use such influence as he commanded to bring it to a close." Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1916–1918*, Part I, Ch. IV.

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such a manner as to bring an end to the war almost as abruptly as it was commenced, it is entirely possible for it to continue a long time yet.

With high personal regards,
Believe me, Mr. Secretary,
Very truly yours,
WM. G. SHARP.

Ambassador Sharp to Colonel House.

Paris, *June* 16, 1916.

My dear Mr. House,

I was very glad indeed to receive your welcome letter of recent date, even though it found me in bed slowly convalescing from a severe case of pneumonia which attacked me several weeks ago. I am glad however to say that I expect in a few days to be back at work again.

Fortunately there has been no matter of great moment upon which the Embassy has been called to act since the *Sussex* affair. Incidentally, I am very glad that I could in that case be of some assistance in furnishing the proofs of as unlawful and unnecessary an act as the German submarine warfare has yet been guilty of. The vigorous action of the President in calling the German Government to account for that act has done much to clear the atmosphere as to our position upon the conduct of submarine warfare. His Note was admirable in every way. Everyone over here feels as they must do at home that it has made travelling on the seas much safer not alone to Americans but to the people of all countries.

As to your kindly reference to your wish that I might be home to counsel with some of the leaders on the political situation, I can assure you that for a number of reasons it would be a great pleasure to be able to get home on a short leave of absence. Possibly if matters run along here as they have for some time past, I may avail myself of Secretary Lansing's kind offer to grant me such a leave and spend two or three weeks in the month of July at home.

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With kindest regards to both you and Mrs. House in which Mrs. Sharp joins me,

I am,

Sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

At the beginning of the year, I had written a personal letter to the Secretary of State inquiring if it would be agreeable to the Department to grant me a short leave of absence, should I wish to return to the United States.

I had certain business reasons, so that I should have appreciated being able to spend about four weeks at home. I was also free to confess that, my work having been continuous and exacting, and I having been absent from my office but a very few days since I had taken over its administration in November, 1914, a certain kind of rest brought by relaxation would have been welcome.

Events developing at the front had, of course, kept me at my post, but I now judged that I might safely absent myself for a short period.

Ambassador Sharp to Secretary Lansing.

Paris, *June* 30, 1916.

My dear Mr. Secretary,

At this late date I wish to express to you my grateful acknowledgment of your kind wishes for my early recovery, conveyed to me in your cablegram of last month. Though it came at a time when I was in such a condition as to prevent my seeing anybody, yet I can assure you that it was deeply appreciated.

For the past ten days, however, I have been gradually gaining back my strength, and have been able to give a few hours each day to my official duties.

In view of the outlook over here, as it involves the progress of the war, it appears as though the seemingly endless process of renewed efforts now on, to break through the lines of the enemy, followed again by a lull awaiting other similar efforts, without any material advance for at least a number of weeks

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to come, might at this time permit me to return to the States on a short leave of absence—I would not want a stay of more than three weeks—if it is wholly agreeable and free from any embarrassment to the Department.

A very short time ought to tell if the new offensive action of the British in the North will in any way change the programme which I have herein anticipated. There seems to be a settled conviction here—which I fully share—that the Germans will never be able to make any advance along their present lines in French territory.

In closing, let me attest to the efficiency and fidelity with which the staff of this Embassy have given attention to all matters which have come up for attention during my illness.

With high personal esteem,

Believe me, my dear Mr. Secretary,

Sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

Ambassador Sharp to Colonel House.

Elyria, Ohio, *Sept.* 20, 1916.

My dear Mr. House,

It was my intention to write you from Washington, but every minute of my stay there was taken up by matters which I could not well avoid. Since coming West I have had occasion to visit Detroit twice and to confer with prominent Democrats throughout Northern Ohio. I know you will be greatly pleased to hear that all surface indications point to a very large independent vote for President Wilson. I say "surface" indications, because there has never before been a presidential election in which the silent vote will be such a disturbing factor as to all pre-election calculations as this one.

Indeed, it seems to me that there must be fully half of the voters on which party leaders seem unable to get any line as to their political preference, and practically all changes are toward Wilson.

From the very start—even from reading the American papers in Paris—I became impressed with the conviction that our only cause for concern was from the threatened disaffection

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of the German vote, and possibly of a Catholic vote here and there. While I still think that there is to a certain extent something to be feared from that source, yet I do not think that as to the German vote, it will be anywhere near as solidly arrayed against President Wilson as appeared at one time. On the other hand, I believe he will carry States in the November election which the most enthusiastic Democrat has not been bold enough to claim for him.

To my mind, the result in the Maine election is highly encouraging to the Democrats—so much so that with an energetic campaign carried on there for the November election, I am one of those who would not be at all surprised to see Wilson carry that State. Certain it is that Mr. Hughes has failed to enthuse the people in his campaign thus far. They have looked for bolder utterances from him, and a more definite statement upon a few vital issues than the stand he has taken. I believe that this is not at all from a lack of ability on his part to know what constitutes the real issues, but a very apparent fear, as it appears to me, least he alienate the German support.

My stay of a week in Washington, where I not only met my former colleagues but got into closer touch with the State Department, having also the great pleasure—through the courtesy of the President—to dine with him and Mrs. Wilson at the White House, was of great value to me in a number of ways.

* * * * * *

Sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

When leaving for the United States for the personal reasons I have given, it was, of course, my desire also to reach a closer and more intimate understanding of conditions and the general situation at home. I also wished to discuss with the State Department the various issues which were then of paramount importance in our dealings with the Allied countries. There had, however, been no call from the State Department for me to return to this end, and it was by a mere coincidence

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that, my visit having been postponed because of the military situation at Verdun, I found myself in Washington at the same time as Mr. Walter Hines Page, our Ambassador to England. Rumours to the effect that we had met for the purpose of official conferences were, in consequence, without foundation. In my conversations at the State Department, as well as with the President and Mr. Lansing personally, I learned much that was to be of value to me concerning vital questions of the day. At that time, as indeed at all times, our Government was most anxious to avoid reaching an *impasse* with the Entente Powers over points of policy; the problem of Polish relief was notably causing much preoccupation, as well as the problem of submarine warfare, not acute as long as the German U-boats remained inactive but nevertheless always containing the gravest potentialities.

After spending about a week in Washington I rejoined Mrs. Sharp in my home town, Elyria, Ohio, where we had the pleasure of seeing our old friends, being the recipients of extensive hospitalities.

I found the people of America thoroughly posted as to the developments of the war. More columns were devoted to war news in our home papers than in the Press abroad. And the information was essentially correct. I was able to reply to all who questioned me that the people of our country were getting the actual happenings of the war, that those who thought the American newspaper reports to be fiction were mistaken. There were, of course, some events which lent themselves to romantic treatment, but I referred to the main developments, the real news of the war.

But there were two points to which I was glad to be able to draw the attention of my fellow-citizens. One was the true and deep-lying cordiality existing between both the Government of France and that of our own country, and the people of France in their daily contact with Americans, concerning which I shall have more to say further on in these pages. The other was the capacity for recovery which France was already showing, even in this dark hour while the battle of Verdun still raged.

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I described Paris as a city of mourning, and indeed this was true of the entire country, since there was mourning in perhaps half a million homes. Yet Paris had resumed almost a normal aspect, the cafés were crowded in the afternoons and evenings, and the Boulevards were thronged. In spite of these activities suggestive of peace times, however, full realization of the horrors of war was kept alive by the thousands of women in mourning, the numbers of buildings and auditoriums converted into hospitals, the continual appearance of crippled soldiers, and the marching of troops bound for the battle lines.

The battle of the Somme began on July 1, with a combined action by the French under General Foch, with Generals Fayolle, Micheler, and Humbert, and by the English under Marshal Haig, with Generals Rawlinson, Allenby, and Gough. The plans had been carefully drawn up by General Foch as a consequence of conferences held between the Allied Commanders-in-Chief, since the participation of the British Army, whose direct intervention had not been desired by the French at Verdun, was essential on the Somme.

But the battle, instead of marking the beginning of the year, as had been decided in the Allied Councils held during December, 1915, and January, 1916, had been retarded for various reasons, among these being, I understand, the slowness of preparation of the Russians who were to take the offensive simultaneously on the Eastern front. The battle of Verdun, far from altering the plans for the Somme, had rendered it only the more necessary, in the opinion of French military experts, including General Pétain, in charge of operations at Verdun.

The attack was in this instance prepared by a formidable artillery bombardment, and the battlefield extended across the Picardy plateau, both north and south of the Somme. Before the end of the battle, a new and powerful weapon, the "tank," was introduced to help the infantry.[1]

[1] On September 15, 31 British tanks crossed the German trenches and demonstrated their fighting value. See Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1916–18*, Part I, Chapter VII.

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The attempt to break through the German lines, July 1 to 12, changed gradually into a battle of attrition, after the gallant fighting of the two great Allied Armies had led to a victory which, some people said later, might have been carried further if more had been known about the condition of the Germans.[1]

The Somme had, at all events, served the purpose of relieving Verdun, the fourth phase of which battle opened under improved auspices for France.[2]

On October 24, General Mangin's offensive succeeded in recapturing the Fort of Douaumont. Orders being received from General Joffre to follow up this important feat of arms, Vaux was retaken on November 3. Soon after—December 18—the battle of Verdun came to an end after such fighting as the world had in all probability not seen before, and culminating to the glory of France whose watchword had been, "They shall not pass."[3]

[1] In this connection, see notably G. Hanotaux and Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Fabry, *Joffre*, pp. 103–106. It now seems doubtful, however, if the British could have continued, considering the proportion of their losses to the Germans facing them. Whereas Colonel Repington (p. 402) estimated the British losses between July 1 and November 12, 1916, at 370,000, later reckoned at 460,000 (p. 425), Colonel Boraston in *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches* (p. 149) gave the total of British casualties on the Somme as 410,000 against 180,000 Germans.

[2] The French killed at Verdun were 400,000, meaning that more than one-hundredth of the total population of France lie buried there to-day. The total of German losses was estimated by Colonel Repington as 670,000 at Verdun and 600,000 on the Somme. (See *The First World War*, Vol. I, p. 402).

[3] See *La Bataille de Verdun*, by Marshal Pétain. The German Crown Prince makes the interesting admission that "In spite of a sustained effort, we never succeeded in assuring our safety before Verdun," the reason given being that "the French enjoyed great advantages in regard to our unfavourable tactical position; they knew these and made the best of them." *Souvenirs de Guerre* (p. 301). He mentions farther on (p. 307) that the German shell-fire on the Eastern bank of the Meuse alone fell from an average of 93,000 per day when the battle was at its height in June, to one twenty-fifth of this figure at the middle of October. And after the French attack December 15, 1916, he admits: "This very serious second defeat before Verdun was marked, even more than the first, by the number of prisoners taken. The enemy's communiqué announced 11,000 prisoners, mostly unwounded" (p. 320).

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In two different visits which I made to this famous old town and its citadel, as the fortified portion is called, I was eventually a witness to the completeness of the destruction wrought as a consequence of the long series of attacks. I will not go here into details which are known to all the world. But I may mention two singularities which particularly impressed me. First, the Cathedral, conspicuously located in the high part of the town, had suffered very little damage in the 1916 bombardments, though badly wrecked the following year. But stranger still, perhaps, the historic landmark known as the Chaussée Gate, a monument reminiscent of feudal Verdun with two great battlemented towers suggesting familiar engravings of the Bastille, escaped virtually undamaged to the very end of the war.[1]

Not many weeks after the enemy had abandoned his attempts in December, 1916, there came into my office at the Chancery a delegation of citizens of Verdun, headed by the Mayor. They came by previous appointment, and their mission was to have the town "adopted" by some benevolently disposed American city. This request was not a strange one, as it had already been announced through the Press, at various times, that the people of this or that American city would engage themselves to restore certain towns in France.

I listened with the greatest interest to the stories these gentlemen told me, corroboration of which I later secured for myself.

"What was the pre-war population of your town, and how many of its people still reside there?" I asked the Mayor.

He answered that 15,000 souls might be considered as the normal population, but at that time, outside of those stationed in the great fortifications of the place, there remained only eight policemen.

"And where did the people go?" I asked, surprised at such a complete evacuation of the town.

The Mayor replied that all those not employed in work of actual defence had been sent away into other parts of France for safety.

[1] Perhaps because the German prisoners were lodged there.

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However, at that moment I was more interested in plans for rehabilitation. Having a preconceived notion, from my own observation of the ruin of other towns, as to the ultimate plan which must be adopted for their rebuilding, the greater part of my queries were made with a view towards ascertaining the chief needs which must be supplied, for the commencing of a new life when the inhabitants returned.

There would be, of course, school-houses and municipal public buildings to be rebuilt. Then there would be the public utilities, such as gas and water works, to be newly provided since the town had been converted into a mass of ruins. Finally I asked the Mayor how much he would expect the proposed godfather, in the form of some benevolently disposed community, to contribute for this purpose.

After thinking a moment, he replied to me: "A hundred million francs"—some $20,000,000. Staggering as such an amount might seem for the needs of rebuilding a town of but 15,000 inhabitants, yet I am not prepared to say it was an excessive estimate.[1] But it required no intricate calculation to ascertain the probable cost of performing a similar service for the city of Rheims, quite as completely destroyed and having a normal population eight times as great.

My estimate some time later was that the rebuilding of the two cities of Rheims and St. Quentin alone might well swallow up the entire resources of the American Red Cross, though it surpasses any other fund raised for humanitarian purposes known to history.

Manifestly, the way for the rehabilitation of those unhappy towns, so great in number, lay not through the means of

[1] The reconstruction of Verdun was officially celebrated on June 23, 1929, in the presence of President Doumergue, Premier Poincaré, Marshal Pétain, General de Castelnau, and the representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers. President Doumergue said in his address: "In order that Verdun may not fear being destroyed for the eleventh time, our country and old Europe and the world must live in an atmosphere of pure peace . . . No country suffered more than ours, and none presented at the end of the hostilities a scene of such harrowing devastation. Those who were spared this cannot be inspired by a greater desire of peace than we ourselves."

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private charity. The problem was emphatically a national one, so large in its aspects as to be worthy of a nation's serious consideration. Perhaps the best-directed efforts of all the work of the many relief organizations so humanely conducted was that which tended in the direction of helping others to help themselves. In the afflicted territory this was particularly true where agricultural implements were needed to till the soil, seeds for planting, and animals for the small farms.

But the liability to error was no greater in considering the manner in which to extend financial aid for this purpose of rehabilitation, than it was with another aspect growing out of this problem. I refer to the impression, as I was led to believe, which had been created throughout America that an all but unlimited market for building materials in this work of reconstruction awaited the resumption of export trade from our shores. From time to time articles of a most alluring nature appeared in the magazines and the Press at home, pointing out the necessity on the part of our manufacturers to get ready for this great demand.

I remember reading in one of these magazines a well-written article, which must have involved a good deal of serious work in the compilation of statistics, and emphasizing in glowing terms the opportunities which only the continuation of the war prevented from being placed at the doors of our producers.

Without challenging the laudable motives of the author of the article, nor the conclusions at which he arrived in so far as the amount of destruction was concerned—in fact, in the following two years it became several times greater[1]—yet his observations were the result of but two months of inevitably hasty examination of these conditions. It would have been necessary for him to remain two years. Such a lengthy stay would have caused him to recognize certain customs involving the manner of living born of centuries, instead of decades, which differentiates the type of homes and buildings generally to be found in France, from those so characteristic of America.

[1] For details of the destruction see Chapter XIV, *France Devastated.*

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French towns are not built along the lines of American towns, far from it. One may travel a hundred miles in any direction through France, passing many villages and towns without seeing a half-dozen frame-houses or shingle roofs. Brick and stone, or more often, in less expensive structures, a sort of concrete plaster over laths nailed to studding, form the great bulk of the material used. The freight alone on such material from America to France would preclude its use, even if it were not to be found much cheaper in France to begin with—which would be almost invariably the case. Comparatively little lumber is used in many of these structures, while the class of hardware to which we are accustomed at home rarely if ever appears in the buildings of France.

In justice, however, to those who from time to time sought to call the attention of American builders to the possibilities of a large foreign trade to supply the needs caused by war losses, there was bound to be a market for machinery to take the place of that destroyed or stolen in many manufacturing plants throughout the devastated regions, and structural steel would be needed for the building of such factories.

The same thing must be said as it applied to the use of this structural steel in railroad stations, hotels, and public buildings in some of the larger cities.

I have sought to call attention only to the unwarranted anticipations of our being called upon to supply the wants of these invaded regions, through a misunderstanding to which I have referred. It is my own opinion that while all these reconstructed towns will have the advantage of being new, with more sanitary precautions taken in the manner of building, yet they will be built along lines quite similar to what they were before. In some places the destruction has been so complete that an entire change in the site of the town would be a positive advantage. It is a melancholy thought that in not a few of them the annihilation is so complete that, out of the mass of débris from the ruins of the former buildings, not sufficient material could be found to prove of any use in the work of reconstruction.

In some instances the towns will never be rebuilt, the

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reason for their existence in that locality not being sufficient to warrant the building of another town. Not many weeks before my departure from France, on the occasion of a visit to the beautiful city of Lyons, our very efficient Consul at that place, Mr. Carrigan, invited me to visit what nearly two thousand years before had been a Roman town, located some fifteen miles away. Upon reaching that quaint old place, raised high on a prominence, as are many of the towns of great antiquity, I found within its walled space a veritably deserted town. In what had once been substantial and, in a few cases, remarkably beautiful architectural edifices sufficient to accommodate a population of two thousand people, there had now for many years been a normal population not exceeding forty people. As I passed through the narrow winding paved streets under the overlapping tiled roofs, almost meeting above my head, I wondered at the causes for this almost complete desertion of such a picturesquely located town rising, as it did, out of a plain commanding a beautiful view of the country, even to the snow-capped Jura mountains as the outposts of the Alps beyond.

But to-day practically all the houses of Vieux Perouges, as this town is called, are in ruins from the combined action of time and abandonment. One of the finest which Consul Carrigan pointed out to me had been the residence of the Governor of the city in the XVth Century; it had been bought by Mayor Herriot of Lyons for purposes of preservation.

How many other deserted places in France there are I do not know, but from the very fact of the age of the country itself, with its two thousand years behind it, everything there is old. It is this thought which I sought to impress upon my fellow Americans who would have endeavoured to introduce into this older civilization new customs, new manners, new modes of living. Both the old and the new have their advantages, and it may be well wished that the best of both could be made to take the place of the worst of both.

The battle of Verdun had, then, successfully ended, and the battle of the Somme remained in suspense. The plan to

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resume it early in February, 1917, was not applied, however, because of the change made in December when the French supreme command was withdrawn from Marshal Joffre. If he had continued the battle on the date proposed by him, he would have caught the Germans in the midst of their preparations for retreating on the Arras-Soissons Front, an operation which they were able to carry out successfully in March, 1917.

It is also to be noted as a singular coincidence that when the Germans learned in Berlin, on December 15, 1916, that there was a change in the French supreme command, they seemed less disposed to talk of peace, and more resolved than before to abide by the fate of their arms.

I know of no more appropriate place than at this point to characterize as inane and without foundation in fact a story which has been widely circulated. It was to the effect that peace between France and Germany in the Fall of 1914 was prevented by the assurance from a certain group of Americans then in Paris that if France abstained from making peace, America would take sides with her in a defensive war. The moving events of that crucial period were all against such a possibility. I had myself not only no communication on the subject, directly or indirectly, with any member of the Ministry, from the day of my reaching Paris until three months later at the time of presenting my letter of credence, but I did not hear of such assurance being given by any other American. Even if such assurance had been given, it could not have come from any official source, and at best only a sentimental value could have been attached to it.

Though having a warm admiration for the human and valorous qualities of the French people—what American who has lived among them has not?—and a sympathy for a cause which America came later to champion, my own position was consistently in accord with the attitude of our Government at Washington in those first weeks of the war, in favouring some honourable and effectual way to bring about an enduring peace between the warring Powers. I had not only publicly expressed this view, but in my first official utter-

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ance in my address to President Poincaré at Bordeaux, as has been seen, I had repeated these sentiments.[1] The fact that the efforts of President Wilson failed to stop the war in no way reflects upon the sincerity of his high purpose; a purpose consistently maintained down to the time when, from a decent respect for our own rights as well as for the very cause of liberty and humanity, we were compelled to enter the war. The logic of events, many of which were known only in the sequel, would have shown the futility of such efforts. The cauldron of traditional distrusts, dynastic jealousies, and greed of power had been boiling too long to be cooled in a day.

With a full realization of the import of the victory of the Marne, preceded as it was within the week by the declaration of the Triple Entente signed at London,[2] binding together the destinies of the British, French, and Russian Governments so that "no one of the Allies will demand terms of peace without the previous agreement of each of the other Allies," it would be difficult indeed to conceive of a situation whereby France would or could have listened to any call for peace from Germany, except on the terms of an unconditional surrender by that Power. Would Germany have made such a surrender? Certainly not, if Ambassador Gerard, at the time of his leaving Berlin, in the middle of February, 1917, correctly interpreted the German mind upon this question.

Upon the Ambassador's arrival in Paris, during a conversation of absorbing interest to me—for I was listening to a fellow American who had unusual opportunity for sensing the situation in the very centre of Germany's activities—the subject turned upon the possibility of a speedy ending of the war, and he set forth the conditions on which Germany would agree to peace. First, she wanted a part of northern France; second, all her colonies restored; third, indemnities from all her enemies, sufficient in amount to pay the cost of the war;

[1] See Chapter IV.

[2] The 1914 Declaration of London was further strengthened by the Allied Conference held in Paris in March, 1916.

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fourth, she would agree to the restoration of Belgium, but to prevent that Power from becoming too closely allied with England she would demand that Belgian railroads should be administered by the Germans, and that German troops should occupy the fortresses; fifth, Poland should not be made an autonomous state, but united to Russian-Poland and subjected to German authority; sixth, Bulgaria should be given *carte blanche* to deal with Roumania as she chose!

In my judgment, no situation that presented itself after the invasion of Belgium, characterized by such features as the victory of the Marne, the subsequent alignment of Italy on the side of the Allies, the verdict of Verdun, and finally the deciding factor of America's weight being thrown into the balance, even though the impossible course of Germany be not considered, would have made it probable that a separate peace could have been obtained from any one of the Allied Powers—much less from France. All the public utterances of French statesmen, from the beginning of the declaration of war down to the signing of the Armistice, sustain this view.

Was it not Premier Briand, replying to von Bethmann-Hollweg in a speech before the Chamber of Deputies on December 13, 1916,[1] in a warning against deceptive overtures of peace, who cried "Look out! Take care!" After denouncing the claim of the Germans that their country had been attacked and that they were defending themselves and were the victims of this war, the Premier referred further to the enemy's announced desire for peace, saying: "I cry out, 'Is it true? Do they dare, after the Marne, after the Yser, after Verdun, to make such an offer to France, erect and glorious?'"

Indeed, not only negativing the likelihood of any kind of peace agreement between France and Germany, but even denying that it had ever been offered, President Poincaré in a speech delivered at Nancy on May 14, 1916, declared: "Neither directly nor indirectly have our enemies offered us peace. But we do not wish that they should offer it to us,

[1] See *Journal Officiel de la République Française*, December 14, 1916.

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we wish that they should ask for it; we do not wish to submit to their conditions, we wish to impose ours. We do not desire a peace which would leave Imperial Germany mistress to recommence the war, which would suspend over Europe an eternal menace; we desire a peace which would receive serious guarantees of equilibrium and stability by the re-establishment of right."

Furthermore, an Allied Conference had been held in Paris, March 27 and 28, 1916, attended by representatives of Belgium, England, France, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Russia, and Serbia, at which resolutions were adopted affirming the complete community of views and solidarity of the Allies. Even unity of action in all economic matters had been discussed, as well as the establishment of a permanent Committee of the Allies in Paris.

As far back as April, 1915, my attention had been called by private friends to unsubstantiated rumours then being circulated in Paris, to the effect that conversations were already being held between the two groups of Powers. The very articles supposed to be drafted were mentioned, with the additional proviso that the announcement should be made public on the 27th day of that month, after the way had been paved notably by protests then already appearing in the French Press against German peace propaganda, the purpose of these protests being allegedly to provoke a reaction in the public mind.

Needless to say, the appointed date came and passed without developments, as might have been foreseen. Nevertheless, as a curiosity, and because I have mentioned Germany's ostensible conditions in 1917, I may add that the articles of the peace rumoured by so-called "defeatists" to be possible in Paris in the Spring of 1915 were four in number, briefly as follows: First, France recovers possession of her departments now occupied by Germany, she receives no war indemnity but she pays none, she is freed from the oppressive clauses of the Frankfort Treaty but continues to allow Germany full commercial liberty; second, Belgium recovers her autonomy and territorial independence, Antwerp being re-

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stored, but Germany retains privileges for full commercial freedom; third, England comes out best of all, she loses only certain points in the control of the high seas, regarding the right of blockade in case of war; fourth, Japan loses her territorial acquisitions, since all German colonies would have to be restored.[1]

The possibility that, at such a juncture, either side would agree to such terms was an illusion as great as that concerning Germany's own hopes in the way of concessions from the Allies.

Some months later, developments of a more noteworthy nature occurred. I was led to understand that the British Government considered all German overtures through informal neutral sources as representing not proposals of peace or even interchanges of views, but only indications of which a record might be made for future reference. It was judged that Germany would demand indemnities, the mere suggestion of which was regarded as an insult by the Allies; the return of the Colonies would be demanded by Germany; and at that price Belgian liberty would be granted. But the restoration of full Belgian independence, with indemnities to pay for her reparations, was a condition which Great Britain took to be an essential not even open to discussion. Furthermore, the Allies were resolute in their determination for future guarantees of the peace of the world.

So that, impossible as a separate peace appeared to be for any of the Allies, a general peace did not seem to be any more likely at that juncture.[2]

[1] Ambassador Morgenthau has written that in June, 1915, German Ambassador von Wangenheim in Constantinople represented Germany as ready to surrender Belgium, taking perhaps the Congo in exchange; in December, 1915, General von Falkenhayn said Germany would surrender all the territory taken from the French and practically all of Belgium, having gained her chief object in the war, a complete route from Berlin to Constantinople and the East. See *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, pp. 374 and 389.

[2] In reply to the reference to Colonel House's Peace conversations early in 1916, made by Viscount Grey in his book *Twenty-Five Years*, the French Foreign Office issued the following statement published in *Le Temps* of May 30, 1926:

"The English Minister did not, according to his own declarations,

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I was naturally greatly interested in all this. But frankly, while being of a rather optimistic temperament, yet the mists ahead of us, in the winter of 1915 to 1916, seemed to be quite as impenetrable as in the previous months—perhaps even more so, since the Balkan States at about that time so thoroughly complicated an already puzzling situation. A more complete entanglement could hardly be imagined than that which confronted all the belligerent Powers.

Adhering to my practice of not going into details in discussing the situation, I abstained generally from expressing my own views, however, as to either the causes of, or the results that would flow from, the conditions depicted. But the guess of any street gamin would have stood a chance to be as nearly correct upon the probable solution of any given problem presented by this war as that of the most learned statesman; so many things, in those days of kaleidoscopic change, would come completely to unstabilize what seemed to be a sure thing the day before.

The sinking of the *Lusitania* had bordered upon the sinking of the *Maine*, in some respects, coming as it did at a critical moment. Yet I still hoped that we should not find it necessary to preserve either our rights or our dignity by entering into a war with Germany. Not that I at all sympathised with her in the cruel brutality with which many of her acts in this war seemed to have been characterized, but because I felt it had been near the hearts of those directing affairs at

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consider that Colonel House's suggestions coming at the time of Verdun, and in the frame of mind then shown by the Germans, could supply even a basis for conversation among the Allies, since there would have been the risk of affecting their morale. Furthermore the conversations of Colonel House with the French Minister for Foreign Affairs at that period, while mentioning the attention paid by President Wilson to the events of the war, did not formulate a suggestion for calling a peace conference constituting a species of arbitration by the President of the United States. Nor did any conversation in this respect occur in Washington at that period. It is only in December, 1916, that a direct intervention by President Wilson is found, asking the Allies and the Germans to state their aims. The reply of the Allies who, upon the advice of France, made clear their aims, was the starting point of the entry of the United States into the war."

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Washington to exemplify their faith in the doctrine of peace by the conduct of our own nation towards the Powers of the world.[1]

It had looked to me for some time past that the outcome as to whether it was to be war or not with Germany would depend solely upon Germany herself; the terms in which her answers were couched certainly did not lessen this probability.

Happily, I could not feel that there was among the leading French officials, and those of influence in civil life, anything but the most generous and tolerant views entertained as to the fairness of the attitude of our Government. Those in authority in France fully understood and appreciated the attitude of President Wilson, and had great confidence in the integrity of his purpose.[2] I had always received personally from all officials evidence of the greatest cordiality and good feeling, and I believe that there was an earnest desire upon the part of the Foreign Office not only to facilitate the work of the Embassy in every way, but to comply with its requests whenever possible.

Sir Francis Bertie, the British Ambassador, told me one day that he was very much in hopes that we would not go to war with Germany, as we could be of very much more assistance to the Allies out of the war than actively in it.[3] The

[1] Ambassador Walter Hines Page of London believed that the severance of diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany in the latter part of 1915 or early in 1916 would have ended the war. Even after the sinking of the *Lusitania* he did not consider President Wilson should immediately declare war, but expressed faith in him to keep the firm stand taken in his first Note. See Hendrick, Vol. I, p. 50, and Vol. II, pp. 18–19.

[2] Ambassador Sharp expressed himself similarly in a letter dated June 2, 1915, addressed to Colonel House. See *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. I, Chapter XIV.

[3] Possibly because of his lack of faith in the efficiency of America's military effort, since in his *Diary* Lord Bertie made frequent caustic remarks about American neutrality. In 1917 he wrote, however, "Ribot spoke about the United States having become a belligerent against Germany. I suggested that the American Navy might be of great assistance in hunting down German submarines but that the military aid to be given by an American contingent to join the French Army could not for a long time to come be anything more than a demonstration. Ribot concurred." *The Diary of Lord Bertie*, April 8, 1917.

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question of just what we could do if we engaged in war had been a matter of curious speculation on the part of many Americans in Paris. My own belief was that it would be in a way typically American, and to the initiated that means very much.

I may, indeed, take this opportunity to say that I never at any time found the slightest foundation for the reports emanating at this time from certain American writers abroad, to the effect that the French had come to hate the Americans. On the contrary, the French people had everywhere given expression to the highest praise for the aid that had come from America to the afflicted. I know that the French Government, in particular, was most grateful for what Americans had done and were doing to relieve distress not only in France but in Belgium.

In general, the tone of the French Press had been up to this time moderate and rarely critical of our policy, though there had always been manifested a keen desire for the championship of the Allied cause by our Government. The impartial attitude maintained by it since the beginning of hostilities had, naturally, caused the Powers engaged on each side of the conflict to wish for a more pronounced recognition of its own particular cause. That very fact furnished the best proof we could have that our Government had succeeded in maintaining its neutrality while securing the protection of its own rights. The French Government had absolute confidence in the fairness of the United States.

While I could not as a rule discuss the war freely, there was nothing in the obligations of neutrality, nor in the etiquette of diplomacy, to prevent me or anybody else from offering such praise as I was capable of voicing of the wonderful French people and their splendid Government.

It irritated me particularly to hear so many people say how wonderful the French have been in this war, how different from what the world supposed them to be. If the world did suppose them to be different, which I doubt, so much the worse for the judgment of the world.[1]

[1] The spirit displayed by France was foreseen by M. Clemenceau when, in a speech at the Senate on February 10, 1912, he said that in

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I had by that time seen the French people under fire for two years, but I would talk of them as I would in times of peace, for their great cardinal characteristics are always the same. The qualities which have aroused the admiration of the world are not merely Latin, nor were they even dormant nor in the background before the war. They are French and they are perpetual, not something that came as a miracle out of the sky to tide a people over a crisis. The underlying qualities of the French are their strong spirit of democracy and their solidity of character. Accompanying these, and also essentially French, are the nobility of thought and feeling, the imagination and fancifulness. That is the part that is on the surface. It manifests itself in the life of Paris that the rest of the world goes to see, but the rest of the world makes a great mistake if, after seeing France at play, it goes away again thinking that it has seen all there is of France.

We know there is the saying that in England it is all for the man, in America all for the woman, but in France all for the child. Can any country go far wrong in which each generation lives and works and thinks, not for itself so much as for the generation that is to come after it? Only one Frenchman said: "After us the deluge," but the French people say, "After us, our children. Let us make France better for them." There is the true spirit of the French, something that is never dulled nor tarnished by the customs of the people whom it dominates to enjoy life, in a way that may seem frivolous only to sightseeing visitors who do not understand.

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answer to an English newspaper editor who had asked him for an article on "the calm firmness of the new France," he had accepted the expression, considering that France had not lost her traditional dashing spirit while gaining in self-control and in cold, tranquil will-power. See G. Clemenceau, *La France devant l'Allemagne* (Paris, 1916), p. 15.

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CHAPTER IX

FROM NEUTRALITY TO WAR

In a telegram sent to the Department of State on May 31, 1916, I had referred to the adverse comment by the Paris Press on the speeches made by President Wilson before the Washington Press Club and the League to Enforce Peace. Special exception was taken to the statements in the first to the effect that the combatants could not be held to ordinary standards of responsibility, and in the second, that the United States was not concerned in the causes or the objects of this war.

When, in December, 1916, I received in cipher from Washington the text of the American Note to the belligerent States,[1] asking to know their objects of war, with instructions to communicate it at once to the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, I well knew how important it was that French public opinion should perceive the true character of the American suggestion. Questioned by members of the Press to define it for them, I replied to the best of my ability that our Government had decided to ask the belligerent States whether they would make known their purposes of war, or in other words their aspirations, in order to guarantee themselves against a fresh conflict and assure Europe a permanent peace. I concluded:

"In taking this initiative, the Government of the United States had a double object. On the one hand, we intend protecting our interests against the dangers which menace them. On the other hand, the United States thus express their desire that an honourable peace should put an end to the war."

It was indeed a well-timed appeal, received with respect in

[1] Ambassador Gerard has commented upon the difference between the texts of this Note as delivered to the Allies and to the Central Powers respectively. See *My Four Years in Germany*, Chapter XVII.

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France, and replied to in no uncertain terms on January 12, 1917. What I had particularly observed was that on this occasion America's motives had not been misconstrued.[1]

Shortly after, however, I was witness to the cold reception given in Paris to the President's address before the Senate, January 22, 1917, in which he gave utterance to the famous phrase "Peace without victory." I can testify to the painful impression which it created. It indeed came as a wet blanket thrown over the efforts of those who advocated peace only by a military victory.

But soon after, the German Imperial policy was to bring matters to a head, leading America inevitably into the war.

With reference to the December Note I had written:

Ambassador Sharp to President Wilson.

Paris, *January* 12, 1917.

My dear Mr. President:

Without doubt the most important as well as most interesting event which has occurred since my assuming charge of this mission has been the sending of your recent communication to all the belligerent Powers. I believe it is the greatest duty of the hour to find some way in which a further—and possibly a very long—continuance of this seemingly limitless destruction of life and property may be prevented.

In making this observation, I am only too well aware of the answer which is so persistently made, that only that kind of termination of hostilities must be brought about as will ensure a permanent peace. In full sympathy with that position, I am yet constrained to ask: "Will the still greater sacrifices of more millions of lives, and untold billions of dollars of additional indebtedness, bring the belligerent Powers any nearer to

[1] Minister Whitlock has written of its reception in Belgium: "The following day we had the full text of the noble document that was already beginning to suffer from that misunderstanding which was to be its fate, the fate for a while of all the pronouncements of great statesmen of vision who look beyond the present hour." See Brand Whitlock, *Belgium Under German Occupation*, Vol. II, Chapter XXXVI.

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that universally desired end when there will be no more wars?"[1]

I ask this question also, fully aware of the terrible sacrifices that all the belligerent peoples have made—and particularly those of France, who have suffered so much from the havoc wrought by the enemy in their country. The loss of more than one million of her soldiers, and nearly that many more seriously crippled, together with the fact that there are several hundred thousand more languishing in the prison camps of the enemy, all tend to cause great bitterness of feeling toward the Germans in particular. Then, too, among those who remember the days of 1870–71, there is an intense desire to redeem France from what they regard as her humiliation at the hands of the same enemy.

As far as the actual work of destruction to her towns and villages also is concerned, it is probably true that France has suffered the most in this war. A brief trip recently made to the cities of Rheims and Nancy—near the latter of which are located a number of towns fairly typical, in their mass of ruins, of others all along the battle-front—revealed to me more than any written description could possibly do not only the completeness of the destruction wrought, but the sad plight of the inhabitants themselves, many of whom have been forced to abandon their homes entirely and seek shelter and employment elsewhere.

The occasion of this trip was the participation in ceremonies commemorating the beginning of the work of Americans, who are helping in a most practical manner to rebuild some of these destroyed homes.

These very conditions, however, which find their duplicate in so many sections of Europe, along the frontiers where bombardments have taken place, furnish, to my mind, all the

[1] "The full extent of the economic disaster of the war is not yet known. Europe is still engaged in grappling with it; we have certainly not yet seen the worst of it. . . . It might have been more merciful to Europe as a whole, if this disaster had made itself felt more quickly and imperatively, and so had shortened the war. The longer the war went on the greater the magnitude of the economic disaster was sure to be." Lord Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-Five Years* (London 1925), Vol. II, p. 20.

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stronger argument why an appeal for a return to reason and consequent cessation of hostilities should be heeded.

Sometimes, on account of the very proximity to these horrible scenes, it has seemed to me that I have been looking upon some great painting but, owing to the nearness of its location, I am only permitted to see in detail a very small section of the canvas. The trunk of a tree or the banks of a stream near me alone stand out with any vividness, while it becomes impossible at such a short range of vision to grasp the whole conception of what the picture represents.

Applied to the war situation, the difficulty is even more complicated from receiving the divergent views of so many who, coming from various points in Europe, express widely different opinions born of their own particular environment.

But out of it all, if my judgment is good for aught, comes the settled conviction to me that the very inexorableness of the conditions existing in this war demand—even if the questions affecting humanity itself be put aside—a most thoughtful consideration of your suggestions by all the Powers concerned.

That the answers now in from both sides do not give more hope that your efforts to being about a cessation of hostilities may be successful, will be a disappointment not only to the peoples of the neutral Powers but, I am forced to believe, also to many millions of those likewise of the belligerents, however much the trend of the public Press may be otherwise.

. . . . . .[1]

The most deplorable feature of the situation is that not alone does each day add to the bitterness of feeling, but also to the complications which later on must be smoothed out and adjusted.

I believe it all points unmistakably to the conclusion that the Allies, unwilling to let the verdict of the war thus far go down into history as it is, and having a very great faith in their

[1] The passages omitted here deal with the three main features of the war which Mr. Sharp discussed in a number of letters: trench fighting, the importance of aviation, and the numerical near-equality of the adverse forces. See notably the letter to Secretary Lansing dated March 17, 1916, Chapter VIII, and the letter to President Wilson dated August 24, 1917, Chapter X.

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ability to win such victories over the Central Powers as either to crush them or cause them at least to offer very definite and liberal terms of peace, have irrevocably determined to push their offensive with renewed energy.[1] To oppose them, the Central Powers will prosecute their side of the war with a fury and destructiveness both on land and sea such as have not characterized their operations in the past.

Unquestionably, even more as an instrument for encompassing the defeat of the Central Powers than the greatly increased supply of guns and munitions, the Entente Powers consider the growing scarcity of food, both in Germany and Austria. While, undoubtedly, such scarcity exists in many places in those countries, yet how far the radical steps taken to conserve the food supply may account for the rumors of this great need, I must confess I am in doubt.

The reply of the Allies to your communication just recently published has naturally caused a wave of hatred to pass over Germany, but I suppose it is out of the question to expect at this time such answers to be free from invectives and criminations.

Such are the conditions, unhappily, which your message, inspired by such high purposes, must meet. Only can I with truth say at this moment that not only was it received with the greatest respect here in France, but its motives were never questioned. It has most assuredly served the double purpose, at a time which, I must believe, is opportune, not only to acquaint the belligerent Powers with the fact that there is left open a door which may lead to an honorable peace, but also to make manifest that questions affecting the war have suddenly taken on a civil rather than a military character.

[1] "Balfour asked what would be the attitude of France supposing that Germany offered now to evacuate Belgium and to retrocede Alsace-Lorraine. Would the feeling be in favour of accepting? I said 'No,' because France would require more than such an offer. She would not give back anything that she had taken from Germany, and she was bound to her Allies not to make peace without their concurrence. Moreover, the determination of the French people as a whole was to crush Germany so as to have a durable and not a lame peace." *The Diary of Lord Bertie*, August 15, 1916.

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Wishing you, my dear Mr. President, abounding success and good health for the coming New Year,

I am, believe me,

Most sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

During a half-hour conversation held shortly after with Baron Denys Cochin of the Foreign Office, he expressed views to which I attached great weight, because of his prominence in the Government and the deserved confidence reposed by all classes in his integrity and judgment. The cordial relations existing between us since the early days of the war had always invited from him the greatest frankness.[1]

Discussing the recent reply of the Entente Powers to President Wilson's communication, he said that he had understood that Zimmermann had publicly stated that, in behalf of the German Government, he had confided to the President in some form of statement the specific terms on which the Central Powers would agree to peace. He said he greatly hoped this was true, and that they were of such a nature as could be accepted with honour, so as to bring to a close a war which had been so terribly destructive. Declaring that an unprecedentedly vigorous attack by the Entente Powers was imminent, at the same time expressing his settled conviction that the enemy was feeling in its most drastic form the results of the embargo shutting off foodstuffs and certain supplies much needed for explosives, Denys Cochin still earnestly deplored the fact that, unless terms of peace could be quickly agreed upon, the coming months would witness a terrible sacrifice of life on both sides. His clearly implied lack of faith also in the efficiency of a subjugation of the enemy, to guarantee in itself permanency of peace, greatly impressed me.

While these statements could properly be said only to represent his personal views, yet coming from such a source I believed they were representative of a growing sentiment among many of the more thoughtful people. In confirmation of this opinion was the statement made to me at my home by

[1] See Chapter III.

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one of the most prominent Senators in the French Parliament, that most serious thought was being given by some of his colleagues to the discussion of the suggestions contained in the President's communication addressed to the belligerent Powers. He expressed to me the earnest hope that these efforts might bear fruit.

I therefore telegraphed to the President in part as follows:

Ambassador Sharp to President Wilson.

In view of what I must believe to be encouraging symptoms of a more receptive public mind towards your recommendations than the various Governments and the Press reflect in their attitude, I am prompted to voice again my belief expressed to you in a former cablegram, that the Central Powers ought to come forward now with definite and generous terms upon which peace may be secured. They should be free from arrogance, boasting, and recriminations. It seems to me, on the eve of the delivery of your great message to the Senate which so effectively brushes aside the cobwebs of barbarous and old-time doctrines, and so clearly pioneers the way to a new international freedom and common brotherhood of nations the time for setting forth these terms has been made psychological. Once the forces again grapple for supremacy with greatly intensified power to destroy, another million lives will have been given up before any pause can be made to heed a further call to peace. Your message is masterly.

SHARP.

Count Bernstorff has not left for conjecture the degree of consternation which the last fateful Note of his Government, dated January 31, 1917, repudiating previous pledges and announcing unrestricted submarine warfare, created at Washington. In reading his own story of this event, *My Three Years in America*, it is certain that no one was more greatly alarmed at its portent than this same German Ambassador. Foreseeing the direconsequences which would follow from such a challenge, he had sought in every way the modification by Berlin of this

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harsh note. Receiving it on January 19, twelve days in advance of the time at which he was to deliver it, he tells us:

"On the 19th of January I received official notice that the unrestricted U-boat campaign would begin on February 1 and I was to give the American Government notice accordingly on the evening of the 31st of January. After all that had happened, I could but regard this intimation as a declaration of war against the United States, and one which, in addition, put us in the wrong; because it put an end to the peace overtures made by Mr. Wilson which had been started with our approval. I did my utmost to try to get the Berlin resolution cancelled or at least to obtain a postponement of the date on which it was to come into force."[1]

His telegrams to Berlin at that time fully confirm this statement. How great, indeed, had been the concern with which Count Bernstorff had looked upon his Government's declaration may be understood from the fact that he had even built hopes, late as was the time, upon the message which President Wilson had delivered to the Senate on January 22, three days after he had himself received such notice. It was Mr. Wilson's famous "Peace without Victory" message. This particular phrase of the President kept me busy explaining its proper meaning for the following week to French statesmen.

On this occasion, after having sounded, in the month previous, both the Central as well as the Entente Powers as to the possible terms of peace on which they might agree, President Wilson addressed the Senate. It was a speech well calculated to cause the belligerent Powers to reflect deeply upon the great truths which he had uttered, supported quite as much by the principles of humanity as by those of wisdom and reason. While its effect, regardless of its purpose, was undoubtedly to notify them of those rights which the United States would expect to defend if violated, especially as affecting our rights upon the high seas, yet it was full of good will and counsel. This message was memorable for having singled out Poland, even at that early date, as an example of a country that

[1] *My Three Years in America*, Chapter XI, "The Rupture of Diplomatic Relations."

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should be autonomous, with a Government responsive to the will of its people. Of all the epochal war messages delivered by President Wilson—and they all show a remarkable consistency of purpose—this particular message of January 22, 1917, impresses me as taking the very front rank both in the quality of statesmanship and in blazing the pathway for a new order of international relationship. From my location in Paris, too, where were constantly coming and going the leaders of all the Allied peoples—and they represented an overwhelming majority of the earth's inhabitants—I was led to believe that no other message of the President more profoundly impressed them.

Whatever may have been Count Bernstorff's shortcomings down to the time when he took leave of our shores—for he was serving a hard taskmaster—no diplomat endeavoured to render a higher service to his country than when at this critical time he warned his Government in the most solemn manner of the consequences of its fatal Note of January 31. In no uncertain tones he cabled that " whatever people may say to the contrary, the resources of the United States are enormous," a fact that seemed to have impressed itself upon Germany only a year too late to save it from destruction. But the military interests of Germany on land had but increased the importunate demands of those who would carry on an unrestricted sinking of ships, as regardless of their nationality as of the consequences.[1]

Von Tirpitz did not stand alone in championing such a policy of ruthlessness. Though he was its chief exponent, it must have required the backing of a powerful political element

[1] The German Crown Prince wrote: " On February 1, 1917, unrestricted submarine warfare was declared. I have already stated my opinion about the use of this method as indispensable." *Souvenirs de Guerre du Kronprinz*, p. 337.

" 1917 was, for us sailors, the terrible year of the war, the twelve months of intensive submarine attacks . . . 150 submarines ready, of which 70 were always at sea; 6,200,000 tons of shipping sent to the bottom, of which 875,000 in April alone. . . . Everywhere, but especially in England, the effect was made to build more ships than the enemy sank. In vain: it takes three months to build a cargo-boat, and three minutes to sink her." Paul Chack, *Ceux du Blocus*, pp. 208–209.

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in Germany to have permitted its continuance to such an enormous extent. If anything were needed to detail in its most graphic manner the situation which influenced the German Government to take this step, General Ludendorff, in his interesting book, *Ludendorff's Own Story*, has supplied it in his account of the manner in which this momentous decision was reached. No man in Germany knew better the influences then at work to bring it about. Military interests at the front, as well as an abounding confidence that a few months of such ruthless warfare would decide the war, were the main factors which determined this action.[1]

If, as General Ludendorff asserts, such action was taken only when the promise of success of the peace efforts of President Wilson seemed impossible, I must say that neither he nor his associates knew the President, whose frank message to the Senate, ten days before Germany's formally announced purpose to disregard her promises, showed in its every line a determination to persist in his peace efforts until success should come. And this when he had already been informed by Count Bernstorff of the German Government's forthcoming announcement! The sentiment of the American people was strongly back of the President, with the exception of those political opposition leaders whose approval it would seem no course of action on his part could have secured.[2] Indeed, a few weeks

[1] "Civilization was outraged by the German bombardment of the English coast towns, such as Scarborough and Hartlepool. This was no sudden German inspiration, but part of their carefully considered plans. Wangenheim told me, on September 6, 1914, that Germany intended to bombard all English harbours, so as to stop the food supply. It is also apparent that German ruthlessness against American sea trade was no sudden decision of von Tirpitz, for, on the same date, the German Ambassador to Constantinople warned me that it would be very dangerous for the United States to send ships to England." *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, New American Edition, 1926, pp. 94–95.

[2] As early as October 18, 1916, Count von Bernstorff had communicated to Colonel House a Memorandum referring to the possibility of Germany's regaining her "freedom of action" which the German Ambassador declared "was not intended as a threat of more drastic U-boat warfare" but which Colonel House annotated as being "clearly a threat to resume submarine warfare in the event the President does not immediately intervene in the European war." See *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. II, Chapter X.

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later Mr. Gerard, while in Paris, on his return from Berlin in the middle of February, said to me: "If Germany had been wise and patient and withheld her declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare, President Wilson would have had peace in the world within four months."

At this time there was the greatest agitation among the Allied Powers as to what attitude they should take about permitting Socialist delegates of the Allies to have places, with Labour representatives, to attend the Stockholm Convention. My Government therefore instructed me to ascertain the position of the French Government in reference thereto.

Charges of German intrigue filled the air, and the loyalty of some of the would-be delegates was even doubted. The probability of German influence at such a convention was looked upon with a great deal of alarm. Above all, what was needed at that particular time was a united front, a solidarity of Allied sentiment. No division must be tolerated, no experiment permitted. It had, of course, been a notorious fact that in some of those countries, particularly in France, the only overt opposition that manifested itself toward the existing Government came from the Socialist element in Parliament. The opposition came from the divergence of political views and anyone knowing French politics would say, as in the natural course of events.

While I found a quite unanimous sentiment, not only from representatives of the Italian Government but also the British, against allowing delegates to attend this convention, perhaps the most pronounced objections came from the Government of France.

Very soon after receiving my instructions, an opportunity for testing this sentiment and of finding out within a short time the consensus of opinion of the Allied Powers presented itself.

Although the United States was not even indirectly participating through any representative, the Allied Governments themselves were at that moment holding an important conference in the city of Paris. As it was customary for the officials of the Government upon the occasion of any such notable meetings

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to give receptions and luncheons, at the residence of either the President or the Minister for Foreign Affairs, so on that particular afternoon I found myself, though not participating in the conference that had just been held, a guest at luncheon at the Elysée Palace.

Within the salons of the President's mansion were gathered that day all the notable representatives of the French, British, and all the smaller Allied Governments. Here was indeed an unexpected opportunity to send back to the State Department at Washington a very comprehensive report upon the matter, and I lost no time in availing myself of it.

I found a quite unanimous sentiment that, if such a convention was justified at all, the time was inopportune; and, while there was no feeling of antagonism expressed against the freedom of discussion of all the issues that might be involved in Labour controversies, yet it was felt that even to grant permission for the attendance of such delegates might be considered by the enemy as a sign of weakness and division.

It was after I had talked with Signor Sonnino, of the Italian Government, and Mr. Lloyd George of the British—the latter of whom had said to me, even at that early date, that he would welcome the coming to England of Mr. Gompers to confer with Labour leaders—that I spoke to Mr. Balfour, who was also in attendance at the Conference. Asking what he thought of the possible consequences of such a meeting, and what would be the attitude of the British Government in permitting delegates to attend, the subject turned naturally and logically to the attitude of Mr. Arthur Henderson, Member of Parliament and one of the foremost Labour leaders in England.

Turning to me, Mr. Balfour said: "I shall never fear the work of one who takes John Wesley for his model in life, as does Mr. Henderson."

Such an answer caused me more surprise than anything that had fallen from the lips of any statesman with whom I had talked at the time. It possessed in my eyes a double significance, for it threw a sidelight upon my distinguished interlocutor himself and his convictions, while telling me in one

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brief sentence what kind of a man Mr. Henderson was, of whom I had been reading so much. Mr. Balfour might have said, "I trust Henderson because he is a man of long experience, level-headed and prudent," or "I trust him because he is a patriot and has the future of his fellow men at heart." Instead he trusted the great Labour advocate because Mr. Henderson had within him something higher than a mere degree of mentality—a principle that would guide him to duty as unerringly as the mariner's compass would guide the course of his ship, the spiritual element of security which, in a crisis, would prove infallible, and against which the waves of anarchy might beat in vain.

It may not be inappropriate, before closing this chapter, to summarize the results of the submarine activities of the German Navy during the war. The mere announcement from week to week of the loss of so many thousands of tons of shipping conveyed to the lay mind but a hazy conception of its real meaning. Perhaps a better conception would be obtained of its enormity if an attempt were made to visualize the extent of this loss, by imagining a journey in a swiftly-moving passenger train passing in review the resurrected hulks of these lost ships. On such a journey, one would find that if they were linked together end to end in a continuous line, it would require ten hours of constant riding at the rate of forty miles an hour before the last boat had been passed!

To illustrate in another manner: If these sunken craft were to be re-floated upon the waters of Lake Erie, and the eastern end of the line stationed at Buffalo, one would be able to walk from deck to deck until the city of Detroit and Lake St. Clair had been well passed. In size, they ranked all the way from the great *Britannic* and *Lusitania*, down to the smallest fishing smack. In many instances the cargo was of more value than the ship itself. The total loss involved, in dollars and cents, would in all probability exceed an amount equal to six times our national debt at the time of our entrance into the war—approximately six billion dollars.

Desiring to know the exact extent of the loss to her shipping which France had suffered during the war, I asked Admiral

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de Bon[1] if he would kindly supply such information. A few days later I received from him a comprehensive, but very concise, statement of these losses from August 2, 1914, the beginning of the war, to the signing of the Armistice, November 11, 1918. Summarizing the contents of that statement, I may say that a total number of 710 French ships, aggregating 920,000 tons, had been destroyed. All but approximately eight per cent. of this loss had been caused by the enemy submarines. The percentage to the actual tonnage which France possessed before the war was so great as to call out frequent comment from the French Press pointing to the rebuilding of a merchant marine as one of the first after-war necessities.

Naturally, Great Britain suffered most of all the Allied Powers. I have seen it stated on good authority that this loss exceeded 8,000,000 tons. This resulted not only from the immense superiority of her shipping tonnage, but also because of the proximity of England's shores to the submarine bases and the facility for reaching them; besides, the demands upon her fleet made by all the Allies including America was tremendous. In meeting the needs in an endless variety of ways for prosecuting the war, England's ships were absolutely necessary for the success of the Allied cause. The loss in Italian shipping, while not great in comparison, was also a heavy one.

But these were belligerent countries. It was the small neutral countries upon which this indiscriminate warfare fell heaviest in proportion. Of all these, Norway sustained the greatest loss. Powerless from her lack of military strength quite as much as from her geographical position, she could utter no more than a feeble protest against the violation of her rights. I am indebted to my esteemed colleague, the Baron de Wedel-Jarlsberg, Norwegian Minister in Paris, for a copy of an attractively bound brochure which sets forth the losses sustained by the merchant marine of Norway during the four years of the war. Its compilation reflects much credit upon the

[1] Chief of the French General Naval Staff 1918, played a prominent part in the French Naval operations during the war, subsequently in diplomatic work, French Naval Expert with the French Mission to Washington 1921.

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Inspector-General of Navigation of that Government. Setting forth the name of every vessel, and the date of her destruction, from the seventh day of August, 1914, to the end of the war, it gives the tonnage, port of destination, and the kind of cargo, together with its valuation. This comprehensive summary, as a result of more than one hundred pages of such information, shows that during the war a total of 801 Norwegian ships were destroyed, representing a tonnage of 1,224,621; their total value slightly exceeded nine hundred million kroner.

Even Spain, in a much safer position—a country where it was supposed Germany had many sympathizers—was compelled, during the weeks immediately preceding the signing of the Armistice, to utter such a protest to the German Government as to forecast an early severing of diplomatic relations. In fact, I was permitted on several occasions during that trying period to know from my colleague M. Quiñones de Leon, the Spanish Ambassador, how very critical was the situation growing out of Germany's ignoring the rights of Spanish vessels.

During the height of the submarine activities everything was done throughout Germany to inspire the belief that the destruction was so great as soon to cause the Allied Governments actually to retire from the war. One ingenious method used to create this impression in the minds of the people was the publication and wide circulation of a picture headed "England's Plight"; it represented the boats that had already been destroyed off the coasts of England, Ireland and Scotland. The losses were indicated by an enormous number of little black dots representing the destroyed ships in the waters surrounding those shores. In one corner of the picture was printed in large type: "12 months of Unrestricted U-Boat Warfare in the Northern Theatre of Sea War." But the most significant statement accompanying the picture was that in which it was declared that "No ship destroyed by mine or before February 1, 1917, is included in this map." What stronger evidence of the determination of Germany to carry out her threat in her Note to the American Government of January 31, 1917, than is contained in this, her own shameless boast!

It was quite a common experience, when our American

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officers had entered German territory after the signing of the Armistice, to be told by the people that they had been misled by such stories into the belief that the losses to American troop ships, through the German submarine, had been so great as practically to prevent their participation in the war. Substantially the same story was told to me at the Embassy as early as the last of April, 1918, by a Scotchman—a thread manufacturer—who, being beyond the age of mobilization, had been permitted to return from Austria after being detained there since the beginning of the war. In addition to narrating to me a graphic story of the harrowing conditions existing there, he told me that the common belief prevailed among the people that America had less than two hundred thousand soldiers on French soil; that the activities of the German submarines had been so great as practically to shut out any substantial hope to the Allies from America. As we were, at that very time, sending over troops at the rate of one hundred and fifty thousand each month and already had more than a half million of our men actually in France, in cabling to the Department the purport of what had been told to me by this gentleman, I strongly urged the advisability of at once letting the world know the real facts. In my judgment, it was the psychological time to do so, not only to encourage our Allied forces in arms, but to let the German people know the truth.[1] A few days later I was very much pleased to receive the following telegram from the Department:

The Department of State to Ambassador Sharp.

Washington, *May* 4, 1918.

The Department desires to commend your telegram of April 30, 2 P.M., and previous weekly telegraphic reports on the general situation, the information contained in them being

[1] Colonel House recorded in his Diary on February 8, 1918, that he had induced President Wilson to omit from his February 11 Message to Congress the statement that America had 1,500,000 men ready to go to Europe and had 10,000,000 who would go if necessary. Colonel House adds: "I thought the whole world knew, as well as he and I, of the resources of the United States." *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. III, Chapter XII.

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of greatest interest and value to this Government. Your recommendation regarding giving out more information as to the actual number of troops arriving each month from America is receiving the careful consideration of the Government.

It is my belief that the official announcement by Secretary Baker within a week thereafter, that fully 500,000 American troops were already on French soil, had more to do in discouraging the enemy than anything that had gone before. It did more than this, for it correspondingly heartened the Allies. The French Press announced with great enthusiasm the accomplishment of this marvellous feat, and rejoiced in the speedy fulfilment of the promise of aid to the war-weary soldiers of France.

Indeed, some weeks before the sending of my telegram to the Department suggesting that such information be given out, M. Clemenceau in a conversation with me at the War Office had deplored the fact that we were only sending over 50,000 men each month when twice that number were not only needed, but had been promised. His tone was one of disappointment, if not of bitterness. I informed him that in fact we were sending more than twice that many, and I did not fail to assure him strongly that I had every reason to believe that our Government at Washington would soon surprise the world with the effectiveness of our efforts in greatly increasing the shipment of troops to France.[1] Yet there was an unmistakable feeling of pessimism existing among the French people as to our ability to do so. At that time, too, the German armies were making their last desperate efforts to reach Paris, and against them the Allies had no assurance except faith in the invincibility of our cause and the forces behind it.

It being a part of the duties of the American Consuls at the ports of France to report to me the facts which came to their knowledge, concerning the sinking of every Allied ship, I had an unusual opportunity to learn from such authoritative sources of these horrors of the sea. Depositions of the survivors were taken in all cases. Some of the stories related by them were

[1] See also Chapters X and XIII.

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harrowing in the extreme. They all told of suffering and of heroic sacrifice of the strong to help the weak in the face of death. Not a few among the witnesses came later to Paris to tell me in person of their experiences. Even in those times of tragedy, some of them were not without humour.

So frequent and alarming became these attacks, in not a few cases upon American vessels, that soon after our entrance into the war I sent a cablegram, May 14, to the State Department, strongly urging the employment of a great number of hydroplanes, as well as small but powerful motor-boats, to patrol the coasts of France. In my telegram, I compared the situation then existing to the kind of protection which a lone policeman might afford to some good-sized American city. The cases were frequent where running duels lasting several hours occurred between armed merchantmen and the submarines, the latter coming boldly to the surface to make their work more certain. Too often, unfortunately, their prey was entirely unarmed.

It was this latter situation, which had increased to an alarming frequency, that prompted me to cable, July 18, to the President himself, advising against permitting any American vessel to sail for European ports without being fully armed. My telegram to the President was in part as follows:

Ambassador Sharp to President Wilson.

The numerous reports coming to the Embassy from the Consuls at seaports in France of the attacks upon and sinking of unarmed American vessels by German submarines lead me to suggest to you the urgent necessity of taking such steps as will compel all such vessels to go adequately armed. Within the past three or four weeks reports of seven such instances have come to my attention, though there are doubtless others within that time not yet reported. A striking illustration of the need of some drastic measures—both for conservation of foodstuffs and war materials as well as for the protection of lives—may be found in the case of the ——— attacked, though not sunk, on June —th, and reported by Consul Osborne in his despatches to the Department. There were involved in that

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case the lives of thirty-seven men and a property value of ship and cargo of six million dollars. The Consul stated to me in a letter that the Captain had informed him that upon his request to a representative of his company in New York to arm the boat, he received the response that it was not necessary. . . . However, the six other American vessels known to be unarmed were less fortunate and they were all sunk. Despite the destructiveness of these submarines, many reports of their attacks show that by the very fact that their intended victims were able to keep up a running fire, the submarines were compelled to submerge or abandon the quest. Under conditions existing on this side of the Atlantic, it seems little less than criminal in shipowners to permit their ships to sail for ports in Europe without being armed to the fullest extent feasible. With a record conservatively estimated by me, from my own observations of reports as well as through other sources of information, to approximate three thousand ships sunk by submarines since the beginning of the war and a monthly average of not less than two hundred and fifty ships so destroyed since the commencement of the present year, while duly recognizing the activities of our Government, I trust I may be pardoned for calling attention again to my despatch No. —— of May 14. Conditions are so threatening, not alone to our merchant vessels but to transport ships, that every possible effort is justified in sending over all protection that is available for both the convoy and patrol service.

SHARP.

As for the work performed by the American Navy, Admiral Jellicoe on one occasion, while at a conference in Paris, expressed to me his great admiration and warm appreciation for the manner in which it had helped to rid British waters of this menace.

The increasing activity of the submarines, after the adoption of the unrestricted methods of warfare, called out a great deal of controversy as to the best means for combating them. The appearance of American ships of war in European waters accentuated this discussion.

Shortly before Admiral Sims left the United States to assume

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command of our Naval operations in Europe, where he rendered such distinguished service, I had read in home papers an account of a banquet speech which he had delivered in which, confidently expressing his reliance in the battleship and Dreadnought, he had characterized as greatly exaggerated the destructive power of the submarine in naval warfare. In almost daily receipt, as I was at the time, of reports showing the enormous losses which were being inflicted upon the Allied shipping by this undersea craft, I knew that the Admiral had either been misquoted or else was wholly misinformed as to the true situation; I assumed of course the former to be the case. Soon after his arrival in England he came over to Paris, and calling on me to pay his respects he told me what he had heard while in London of these losses; it was a story of intense interest, and coming from one who spoke with authority it only corroborated the reports which I had received.

"Mr. Ambassador, I was astounded at the stories that I heard of the tremendous losses to shipping caused by the German submarines!" was one of his declarations. "A situation has been created which has given the greatest concern to the British Admiralty." His manner of speaking as well as what he told me clearly indicated that he was little prepared for the news which had been given him.

On a subsequent visit to Paris, the Admiral, who had become as deservedly popular in the French as in the English capital, in a talk with me concerning this subject took a very strong position against any attempt of the Allied fleet to attack the German boats in their own waters. Soon after his return to London I received the following letter from him:

Admiral Sims to Ambassador Sharp.

Office Vice-Admiral, Commanding
U.S. Naval Forces, European Waters,
London, *July* 31, 1917.

MY DEAR MR. SHARP:

I am sure you will be interested to read the enclosed article. It is an explanation of the errors made in the criticisms

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of those who advocate "digging the rats out of their holes" or stopping up the hole in the wasps' nest instead of trying to catch the wasps after they are out. The writer of the article, Mr. Hislam, is a very well-known naval writer.

Very sincerely yours,

WM. S. SIMS.

Accompanying the letter came Mr. Hislam's article to which the Admiral referred. Though more plausible than convincing, reasons were given against attempting to "dig" out the German High Sea Fleet, yet to a layman the long delay in successfully "stopping up the hole in the wasps' nest," at Zeebrugge and at Ostend, as was done nearly a year later, seemed inexplicable.[1] Indeed, in the following May, when telegraphing to the Department the satisfaction which had just been occasioned in Paris over the closing of the Channel at Ostend by the sinking of the *Vindictive* near the point of entrance—similar in degree to that which had followed the work of the British Fleet at Zeebrugge—I closed my message by adding:

"While one is filled with admiration at the boldness of these efforts, so useful in their result, yet the question must involuntarily come to many, Why was not such a method carried out long ago?"

An interesting sidelight upon this whole question of adequately combating the submarine menace was given in a cable message from President Wilson to Admiral Sims under date of July 5, 1917. The President declared:

"From the beginning of the war, I have been greatly sur-

[1] "I have never been able to elicit from Naval people what are the insuperable difficulties which prevent our destroying Zeebrugge. I suppose that they exist, as no real attempts are made to attack it." *The Diary of Lord Bertie*, April 28, 1917. "The blocking of Zeebrugge on St. George's Day by Admiral Keyes and the Dover Force . . . may well rank as the finest feat of arms in the Great War, and certainly as an episode unsurpassed in the history of the Royal Navy. The harbour was completely blocked for about three weeks and was dangerous to U-boats for a period of two months." Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1916–1918*. Chapter XV, "Britain Conquers the U-Boats."

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prised at the failure of the British Admiralty to use Great Britain's great Naval superiority in an effective way. In the presence of the present submarine emergency they are helpless to the point of panic. Every plan we suggest they reject for some reason of prudence. In my views, this is not a time for prudence but for boldness even at the cost of great losses." The President's impatience over the delay of the British Admiralty in furnishing adequate protection by convoys for shipping craft was pointedly shown when he added in his telegram to the Admiral: "The absence of craft or convoy is even more apparent on the French coast than on the English coast and in the Channel. I do not see how the necessary military supplies and supplies of food and fuel oil are to be delivered at British ports in any other way within the next few months than under adequate convoy. There will presently not be ships or tanks enough and our shipbuilding plans may not begin to yield important results in less than eighteen months."

That the President greatly differed from Admiral Sims over the policy of dealing with the "wasps' nest" of the submarines, may be plainly seen in his address which he delivered to the officers of the Atlantic Fleet on August 11, 1917, when he stated he was willing to sacrifice for this purpose if necessary, "half the Navy Great Britain and we together have."

A perusal of this address in full plainly indicates that President Wilson had at no time minimized the importance of a method of warfare, which in a score of telegrams to Washington I had sought to emphasize.[1]

From a number of talks which I had with Admiral Benson, whose wise counsel must have been of inestimable value to his associates in the Naval conferences in London and Paris, I know that he advised the employment of every possible resource against the aggressions of the submarines. It had seemed to him incredible that more effective measures had not been taken

[1] Captain Paul Chack, Librarian of the French Ministry of Marine, has estimated at 75,000 tons the monthly average of Allied ships sunk from May to September, 1915. Between the beginning of the War and September, 1915, the Allies had sunk 16 U-boats, 2 UB-boats, and 1 UC-boat. See *Sur les Bancs de Flandre* (Paris, 1927) pages 84 and 85, footnotes.

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to prevent their so audaciously going in and out of the English Channel. I recall a most interesting talk which I had with the Admiral while, one day, going from Paris on a visit to the headquarters of General Pershing at Chaumont.

On that occasion quite a number of distinguished Americans had also joined the party on the invitation of the General. Colonel and Mrs. House and Lord Northcliffe, stopping at the time for a few days in Paris, were also of the party. As we sat by ourselves, in one of the compartments of the car that morning, the Admiral detailed the talks which he had recently had in England with Admiral Jellicoe and others of authority in the British Navy. He told me how he had suggested to Admiral Jellicoe the blocking of the English Channel in some such manner as had already been accomplished in Chesapeake Bay, across the entire entrance of which piles had been driven to prevent the passing of submarines. To this suggestion Admiral Jellicoe had replied that such a thing in the English Channel would be impossible, on account of the strong currents caused by the tides. To meet such a problem, however, Admiral Benson expressed the belief that large blocks of cement, in which heavy steel spikes had been fixed, would sufficiently anchor them at the bottom of the sea. He expressed the belief also that England had overlooked the vital point, in the very early days of the war, of destroying the forts at Ostend and Zeebrugge, instead of permitting them to be fortified.[1]

Rising above all questions of reparation for such enormous loss of property must be the unhappy reflection that for the greatest loss, because so much more precious—the human life exacted by such murderous methods of warfare—there never can be compensation. If the lesson taught by such experiences

[1] Vice-Admiral Ronarc'h, in command of the French Navy in the Zone of the Armies of the North, states in his Preface to *La Guerre navale dans la zone des armées du Nord*, by Commandant A. Thomazi, that in 1917, before his command was withdrawn from him, Admiral Bacon, at the head of the British Naval Forces in the Pas-de-Calais, "had prepared the bottling of Zeebrugge and Ostend, the barring of the Pas-de-Calais, and other things of which I am not authorized to speak." For Admiral Benson's idea about blocking the Channel, see *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. III, Chapter X.

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has any value, it is that, regardless of whatever steps may be taken hereafter to limit the size of armament, having in view the ultimate disarmament of nations except that sufficient for the exercise of police protection, the building or operation of armed submarine ships should never again be permitted. Their demonstrated power of destructiveness, in violation of every dictate of humanity, should make them an outlawed relic of barbarism, no longer to be tolerated by civilized nations.

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CHAPTER X

AMERICA'S ENTRANCE

"IT seems as though some great event beyond the power of man has happened, something that in its influence surpasses events hitherto known——"

Such were the words used by the distinguished Premier, Alexandre Ribot, patriarch in appearance as in deeds, before the Chamber of Deputies on April 5, 1917, at the reading of President Wilson's Declaration of War against the Central Powers.

Surely no one reading this great message could help feeling that it was a masterly exposition not alone of the President's views, but of the opinions of the American people to such a degree of unanimity as perhaps never before had been manifested on any important public question.

I felt sure that the strength of the opposition would be absolutely negligible in both the Senate and the House. The very patience and deliberation that the President had shown in dealing with these momentous problems but added strength to the cause which he had so splendidly espoused.

As for France, I had taken the occasion, at a public function in Paris some time before,[1] to say that she needed no propaganda in America to advance her cause. The heroic conduct of her soldiers, the fortitude and spirit of sacrifice exhibited by her people in suffering the loss of their sons, and the cruel and barbarous despoiling of their homes by an invading enemy, had in themselves furnished most eloquent testimony of the justice of the undying principles for which she was fighting.

Hence the President's message gave me the greatest personal satisfaction. France and America were again brothers in arms for the defence of humanity and the liberty of mankind.

[1] At the Hôtel Ritz banquet of the France-Amérique Society, January 23, 1917.

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The scene at the Chamber was historic and lacked nothing in the elements of the dramatic to make an unforgettable impression upon the minds of all those in attendance. That the Government might on such a memorable occasion—and no event of more far-reaching importance had occurred since the beginning of the war—manifest its gratitude to the United States, I had been especially invited to be present in the Diplomatic Gallery.

Just as the hands of the clock reached the appointed hour, the doors at the right of the Chamber were swung open and the members commenced to file through in small groups. It took but a few moments for the entire body—or at least all those who could be present—to occupy their seats. Here and there, in keeping with the custom established at the very beginning of the war, were the wreaths placed on the desks of members whose vacant chairs told the story of their sacrifice for their country.

The session was opened, and a few moments later the tall form of Premier Ribot, bent at the shoulders just as the storms of years might bend the oak, rose and, mounting the steps of the rostrum, delivered a speech, nearly every sentence of which was punctuated by rapturous applause, on this occasion joined in by every member of the Chamber. Only on one or two other occasions have I seen this repeated, one of them being when President Wilson was accorded the unusual privilege of addressing the Chamber at the time of his first visit to Paris.

As my presence in the Chamber at that moment furnished the only visible means by which the members on the floor below me could render their homage to the United States, the entire membership, rising as by one impulse upon the mention of the name of America by the distinguished Premier, turned toward the diplomatic gallery where I was sitting. Again and again they bowed and cheered. This manifestation was repeated a number of times during the Speaker's discourse.

It was indeed the culmination of a time to which all France had looked in eager, and often yearning, expectancy for nearly two years. A people, not slow to evince their emotions of pleasure and of gratitude, gave vent in the following few days to

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an unrestrained joy over the turn of events. The masterly manner in which President Wilson had set forth the issues at stake was appreciated by men and women whose natural aptitude and innate ability to comprehend every shade in the manner and use of words are unsurpassed.

Some two weeks later, April 22, a reception was tendered to me by the Municipality of Paris at the Hôtel de Ville in honour of America's entrance into the war, the beautiful Salle des Fêtes of the City Council being used as the audience chamber. Admittance was gained only by invitation, which comprised a number of members of the American Colony as well as many high officials of the Government, including the Premier, M. Ribot.

Outside the building, however, an enormous concourse of people had gathered. In fact, all the way from the Embassy residence on the Avenue d'Eylau, more than two miles away, great crowds of cheering people, numbering no less than one hundred thousand, lined the streets leading to the Hôtel de Ville.

Telegram from Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

Paris, *April* 23, 1917.

. . . . Yesterday the city of Paris held most impressive ceremonies.

The programme consisted of a reception at the American Embassy of Jules Cambon, Secretary-General of the Foreign Office, General Dubail, Military Governor of Paris, together with a committee of distinguished citizens in both the civil and official life of Paris. Afterwards a procession was formed which made its way to the statue of George Washington in the Place d'Iéna, at which place a great throng of people witnessed the laying of a wreath of bronze at the foot of the statue. An eloquent speech was made by Senator Strauss, and the singing of the *Marseillaise* and the *Star Spangled Banner* concluded the ceremony. The American flag was hoisted from the mast at the pinnacle of the Eiffel Tower in plain view of the crowd, and aeroplanes circled above the scene waving the French and

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American flags. It is said that it is the first time the American flag has ever been placed on the Tower.

The Committee then proceeded along avenues densely thronged with people to the Place du Carrousel where, at the foot of the Lafayette monument, similar ceremonies were observed. From here the Committee proceeded to the Hôtel de Ville, where it was received by the Municipal Council promptly at three o'clock in the beautiful Salle des Fêtes. The official ceremonies of the day were then formally held in the presence of a distinguished assembly of French citizens, as well as many prominent in the American Colony. M. Alexandre Ribot, President of the Council, Minister for Foreign Affairs, also honoured the occasion with his presence.

Eloquent speeches were made by M. Adrien Mithouard, President of the Municipal Council of Paris, M. Henri Rousselle, President of the Council General of the Seine, M. E. Laurent, Prefect of Police, M. Marcel Delauney,[1] Prefect of the Seine, all expressive of the highest praise and the most generous sentiments toward the United States and their warm appreciation of its powerful alliance with France and her Allies. Their words were especially eulogistic of President Wilson, and his distinguished services in behalf of the cause of humanity. To these speeches I made brief response.

Everywhere the greatest enthusiasm prevailed and an immense concourse of people remained in front of the square facing the Hôtel de Ville until the departure of those participating in the ceremony, when continuous cheers of "Vive l'Amérique," "Vive la Grande République," went up from the throng in the densely packed streets for a long distance leading therefrom.

Clear skies greatly contributed to the success of this manifestation and added charm to the thousands of waving flags of the Allies, among which that of America was most conspicuous.

Taken altogether, it was a most touching exhibition of real joy of the people of Paris and their heartfelt goodwill toward America.

SHARP.

[1] Later French Ambassador to Japan.

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One could not but be impressed with the sincerity of those who spoke on that occasion. There seemed to be a completeness of understanding of the spirit of the American people toward the issues of the war which came from more than a mere reading of it. Perhaps the appreciation of the real meaning of the sacrifices which they themselves had been called upon to make and endure for so long a time, and in such a terrible measure of its exaction, enabled them the better to understand.

My Military Attaché, Captain—afterwards Colonel—Boyd, was sitting by my side as we rode through the throng. Turning to me he said: "Have you noticed the expression on the faces of these good people? Realizing as I do what it all means to them, the question involuntarily comes to my mind, 'Can we do all that they expect of us?' A new desire comes to me that they may not be disappointed."

"Yes," I replied to the Captain. "I presume that there is not one out of ten of those who thus show their feelings to our country but who has lost some relative at the front." Even at that stage of the war there had been campaigns waged in which in single efforts, involving but a few days of intensive struggle, tens of thousands of young men had given up their lives for the cause.

From that day on, continuing throughout the war, there were many similar opportunities afforded in great gatherings to attest the joy of the French people over the entrance of America into the war. There was, for instance, General Pershing's arrival in Paris, the ride to the Hôtel Crillon, the tremendous crowds that poured out to acclaim him. But in point of enthusiasm and certainly in size of the demonstration, such ovations were not to reach their climax until December of the following year, with the long-heralded event of President Wilson's arrival in Paris.

Soon after our formal declaration of war, I was directed by the State Department to proceed to the Ministry of Finance, to discuss the form of a loan or credit in the United States that would be most helpful to the French Government during the period of the next six months.

The Minister of Finance, M. Joseph Thierry, being absent

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from the city, I had an audience with the Premier, M. Ribot, who had been Minister of Finance in several previous Ministries.[1] He was therefore presumably as well qualified to speak of the financial needs of his Government as any other man in France. For many months prior to our own entrance into the war, this statesman had been grappling with the great problems of meeting the financial burden imposed upon his country.

Until that time, owing to our neutrality, we could not advance a dollar to the cause.[2] One may therefore well imagine the welcome that was accorded to me on that day when, sitting near him at the desk, I first made known to him the desire and intention of our Government to come forward and assist France in meeting such grave problems at the moment when the succour was the most welcome.

The splendid spirit evinced by our own Government, being indeed in accordance with that which characterized all its actions during all the months to follow, evidently made a strong impression upon the Premier. He expressed very great appreciation of this tender of help on the part of our Government.

In accordance with custom, I made it clear to the Premier that though information was desired as to the probable extent to which the credit to be given would be employed in the purchase of supplies in the United States, it must not be at all implied that the granting of such a loan would be in any way conditional upon such expenditures in our country, but was only desired as it would have a bearing upon the method of financing.

When I said that I was sure that the sentiment of my countrymen would endorse this action of their Government's,

[1] M. Ribot had been Minister of Finance in the Viviani Cabinet, August 26, 1914–October 28, 1915, and in the two Briand Cabinets, October 29, 1915–December 12, 1916, and December 13, 1916–March 19, 1917. M. Joseph Thierry had been Under-Secretary for War in the first Briand Cabinet. When M. Ribot formed his own Cabinet, March 20–September 12, 1917, he gave the Finance Portfolio to M. Thierry.

[2] Hence the wording of the preamble of the First Liberty Bond Act of April 24, 1917.

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emulating the example which France had set more than one hundred and thirty years before as evinced in the Treaty of King Louis and our own Franklin, in which the King of France had signified that, if necessary, interest items on prior loans need not be paid by the new Republic across the water, the Premier, thanking me for the expression of such a sentiment, replied: "That is a very generous thought, but my country would accept no favours that it would not agree to pay for. It wants no gifts." He went on to state to me that personally he hoped no resolution would be introduced or debated on the floor of Congress looking to making a gift on the part of our Government to France, though his countrymen might appreciate the sentiment of good will which would prompt it.

This did not deter me, however, from making to my Government at Washington a recommendation to render free from payments, for a period of a given term of years, the interests on France's obligation. I said in substance:

"In view of the action of France in the agreements entered into by Franklin representing our country in the time of our own distress in the years 1782 to 1783, it would, however, if I am permitted to make this suggestion, seem a most generous and gracious thing to do if such an arrangement is feasible, in making a loan to France at this time, to provide that no interest shall accrue or be payable on such loan for the duration of the war and for a limited number of years thereafter."

In the course of this conversation, Premier Ribot had said to me: "I am not prepared to tell you to-day what sums will be needed, nor in what kind of instalments. That is a matter which I will take up with the Minister of Finance and let you know as soon as possible." Later, he gave me a statement showing that the needs amounted to $218,000,000 a month for the next six months[1] to pay foreign countries for the requirements of the French Government.

[1] Lucien Petit, French Inspector-General of Finance, in his volume *Histoire des Finances Extérieures de la France pendant le Guerre* (Paris, 1929) gives figures as follows for the advances made to France in 1917, after America's Declaration of War: to the end of May, $100,000,000, and France asked

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The money, soon thereafter advanced by the United States Government to France, would have been considered very large in ordinary times, but was increased by successive loans until it exceeded three billions of dollars.[1]

But it was not alone credit, welcome as it was, that France and her Allies needed from the United States. She must have men to take the place of the two million and more of the Allied soldiers on the West Front who had either been killed or hopelessly maimed. With Russia out of the struggle, America was the only hope of such aid.

Everyone had realized that the falling away of Russia from the Allied cause had been a very serious disaster, one that might eventually portend even defeat for the Allies.[2] Happily the accession of the new American Ally, with resources so potential in their might, served to discount the danger from the East.

Interesting details, showing the extent of America's effort, were soon after given me by my friend Congressman Henry T. Rainey, of Illinois, as follows:

Congressman Rainey to Ambassador Sharp.

House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.
September 10, 1917.

MY DEAR MR. SHARP,

. . . . We passed through the House September 6 the Emergency Bond Bill—eleven billion dollars in bonds and

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for $200,000,000 to July 1, then $160,000,000 per month until the end of the year, or a total of $1,160,000,000. He adds: "We declared that these previsions, to which we had been limited by the representations of the Treasury, were inadequate." (Pages 437 and 440.) France eventually obtained, however, only $1,130,000,000 that year (p. 787) whereas Premier Ribot's rough approximation of her needs as made to Ambassador Sharp foresaw $1,308,000,000.

[1] A capital of $2,933,174,898·71 in obligations held on June 15, 1925, exclusive of interest and of the War Stock Debt of $407,341,145·01.

[2] See *La Russie des Tsars pendant la Grande Guerre*, by Maurice Paléologue, French Ambassador to Russia, 1913–1917.

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certificates—the greatest financial transaction in the history of nations. I assisted in drawing the bill. It passed the House without the slightest change except one unimportant change to which the Committee agreed, and it passed unanimously. This indicates that the United States is commencing to think as a unit on the subject of the great war in which we are engaged. The Emergency War Renewal Bill which will carry $2,500,000,000 will pass the Senate to-day. We will be able to quickly agree in conference on them. I will be one of the conferees. We will be collecting this year in taxes, direct or indirect, in all probability, over four billion dollars in addition to the bond issues, which will amount to probably fourteen billion dollars.

The streets of our cities are filled with the new National Army undergoing intensive training. The entire country is united and we are prepared for much larger contributions of men during each year of this war. We expect a long war and are preparing for it. We all know when it will end—it will end when we win it.

Very truly yours,
HENRY T. RAINEY.[1]

Two missions of an important nature started from France on their way to the United States soon after America had entered into the war at the side of the Allies.

A military mission, for the purpose of discussing the technical organization of our overseas forces, was headed by M. René Viviani as Vice-President of the French Council of Ministers, accompanied by Marshal Joffre.[2]

[1] In his Report, dated May 29, 1926, on "Debt Settlement With France," Congressman Rainey drew attention to the heavy pre-war debt of France amounting to $6,492,000,000 and to the error of believing that the French were not heavily taxed, for they were, only their system of taxation was so complicated that a foreigner could not readily understand it. See House Report No. 1338, Sixty-Ninth Congress, 1st Session.

[2] For the work done by the Joffre-Viviani Mission in America, see *L'Armée américaine dans le conflit européen*, by Général de Chambrun and Capitaine de Marenches (Paris, 1919); also *Les Grands Jours de la France en Amérique*, by François de Tessan (Paris, 1917).

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Secretary Lansing to Ambassador Sharp.

Washington,
April 12, 8 P.M., 1917.

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
PARIS.

Please inform the Foreign Office that this Government is deeply gratified to learn of the proposed visit of Viviani, Marshal Joffre and the distinguished party that will accompany them. We should be glad if it were possible for them to arrive at Hampton Roads where they will be met by representatives of this Government and escorted to Washington. It is understood that the party can remain in the United States only ten or twelve days. It is earnestly hoped during this time they will consent to be the guests of the nation. The American people will understand and appreciate the honor done them by the visit of these illustrious Frenchmen who have contributed so largely to the cause which we have now made our own. The welcome of this Government will be merely an expression of the admiration and affection of the entire American people. Cable reply.

LANSING.

At that time there had been some suggestion of our sending a small expeditionary force of volunteers to participate actively in the operations. But this plan was not viewed with favour by Marshal Joffre, who regarded America as the future reservoir of men for the Allies and considered nothing should stand in the way of a thorough organization to make the best of our vast resources.

I have been told that he carried with him no instructions from the French Government, but worked out on the steamer the project he soon after submitted in Washington for raising, training, and equipping an army, if necessary, of several million men.

It was on the Decoration Day following, very soon after his return from that trip, that he came to the Embassy to present his respects.

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During his hour's visit at my home, he recounted the many interesting incidents of his journey through the United States. He told me that, while his party had expected to be received as friends and Allies, yet the very spontaneity of the welcome that was accorded on every side quite overcame them. They were treated, he added, as *enfants de la Patrie*. In our talk at that time, the Marshal told me with no little display of satisfaction, how when he was in Washington, Mr. Henry White,[1] formerly Ambassador to France and later a member of the American Peace Mission, at whose home he was staying, had arranged to entertain various opponents of conscription at little dinner parties to which he had been invited. After dinner, the Marshal, being questioned by them as to the necessity of this measure, had given them his views in such a manner as quite to convert them.

The second mission, of a largely industrial nature bearing upon the prosecution of the war from the point of view of co-ordination in supplies and transportation problems generally, was headed by M. André Tardieu,[2] one of the ablest and best informed men of France upon all economic questions. He was in a position to acquaint our Government with the most pressing needs of the situation as it existed. In a long talk with him before he left, I told him that I knew no better way to carry out to the fullest extent his task than to have completely at his disposition information upon every need of France. I assured him that he had but to ask to receive, in so far as our ability would permit.

In a letter which I addressed to the President, I discussed the general needs of France, notably in facilities for the transportation of cargoes of freight as they arrived at the different ports,

[1] Henry White, 1850–1928. American Ambassador to Italy 1905–1907, Ambassador to France 1907–1909; Delegate to the Algeciras Conference 1906; to the 4th Pan-American Conference at Buenos Aires 1910; to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace in Paris 1918–19.

[2] French High Commissioner to the U.S., 1917–18 (see his work, *Devant l'obstacle*) French Plenipotentiary to the Peace Conference, Commissioner-General for Franco-American War Affairs and Minister of the Liberated Regions 1919, Minister of Public Works 1926–28, Minister of the Interior 1928–1929, Premier 1929–30.

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where congestion was much complained of. I had had occasion a number of times to visit both Bordeaux and Havre, and I knew there was lack of modern appliances for unloading ships as well as for storing the goods afterwards. I said:

Ambassador Sharp to President Wilson.

Paris, *May* 5, 1917.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

. . . . . .

It is my belief that a Commission composed in part at least of men experienced in the operations of hoisting apparatus and the construction of docks, the building of warehouses, etc., would quickly be of very great service in bringing about improvements in those directions.

A Frenchman of wide knowledge of industrial conditions recently admitted to me that his people were woefully deficient in organization when it came to handling big industrial problems.

Naturally, also, the demands upon the railways in the transportation of troops, munitions, etc., and the shortage of men, have greatly depleted railway equipment, thereby adding considerably to the difficulties of quick transportation. Materials, particularly of the nature of locomotive engines, freight cars, hoisting apparatus, travelling cranes, and for warehouses are greatly needed.

This would, of course, have a very direct bearing upon not only the prosecution of the war but upon the supplying of necessary foodstuffs itself. No better illustration could be given of its effect upon some of the economic conditions existing during the past winter, through this lack of transportation facilities, than to point to the very great scarcity of coal, and its consequent increase in price, approximating at times $60 per ton.

. . . . . .

France presents an example of a united front and unity of action such as, I am sure, is not to be met with in any other belligerent country.

But it is sore distressed and bleeding, the exhaustion is very great—much greater than the world knows—for no other of her

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Allies has suffered such a drain in men and resources. What undoubtedly Marshal Joffre and M. Viviani have already told you as to the heartening effect which the presence of American troops on French soil would exert is completely representative of the sentiment everywhere existing among the French people.

As a concluding observation, may I express the hope that our people at home may come quickly to realize that the success of their co-operation in this war depends upon the rendering of the greatest and promptest kind of assistance to the Allied Powers. Germany must no longer be permitted to "break the sticks of the bundle" one by one until all formidable opposition has melted away.

The offensive of the French troops alone last week resulted in the loss to them of more than 90,000 men,[1] one-third of whom I understand were killed; the loss to the German forces was even greater. Horrible as all this is to contemplate, and great as are these losses, yet the ending of the war even by such attrition is far removed. The cry of France is for men —more men. With a loss in killed of a million and a-quarter of men, and an equal number of prisoners and seriously crippled, France needs active men for ploughing the fields quite as much as she needs them at the front, and to-day a French general told me that a new supply of men was needed in the overworked munition factories quite as much as they were in the trenches.

In the meantime, the work of drawing the teeth of the enemy submarines and, at the same time, of shutting off outside supplies of food from that enemy, is most assuredly the outstanding feature of our task.

With high personal respect and best wishes,

I am, believe me, my dear Mr. President,

Most cordially yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

[1] General Mangin's Chemin des Dames offensive at the end of April, followed by the capture of Craonne on May 4. The French losses in the April–May offensive were estimated at a total of 117,000, of whom 28,000 remained on the field and 5,000 died in the Army ambulances, and 80,000 wounded. The German losses were estimated at 350,000. See Victor Giraud, *Histoire de la Grande Guerre*, p. 501, footnote.

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General Pershing had landed on the shores of France June 13. Though the announcement of his intended arrival had been made known through the Press of Paris only a few hours before his coming, yet the streets along the line of the procession from the Gare du Nord to the Hôtel Crillon became one mass of wildly enthusiastic people. Every window from the big store fronts below, up to those on the mansarde roofs, was filled with people waving handkerchiefs. At the station were waiting a number of Government officials, including M. Martin, Chief of the Protocol, representing the President of the Republic, and M. Painlevé, Minister of War.

My first acquaintance with General Pershing began when I beheld a man lightly swinging off from the steps of the car in which he had come down from Calais. The impression I then formed of his promptness and resolution abode with me as the accurate one, through all the trying months to follow, in the course of long interviews we had in my library, the Red Room I have previously mentioned. There he would discuss the impatience of the French to have his troops get into action, and the complaints against the inevitable slowness of their coming.

More than two thousand prominent residents of Paris, embracing all nationalities, came to the reception I gave for General Pershing and his staff, on that fourth of July, the first following America's entrance in the war. That afternoon a great concourse of people, completely choking the Avenue d'Eylau, had gathered in front of the Embassy to catch a glimpse of the General. Wishing to gratify their desire, I asked him to step out on the balcony leading from the reception salon on the second floor. There, standing between the large French and American flags which I had placed above the shield bearing the coat of arms of the United States, he received a great ovation.

It is true that scarcely a thousand of these uniformed men from another land had as yet come to the side of fighting France,[1] but the significance of it all was that they had come.

[1] The "first handful" of American troops landed in France on June 13. The Expeditionary Force properly speaking began to arrive on July 3, 1917. At first, the plan had been for American soldiers to bring their entire equip-

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Everybody knew what it meant—the augury of such an historic scene. As I stood among my diplomatic colleagues who had come to participate in the ceremonies, conspicuous among them being the British Ambassador, it seemed to me as though after the flight of seven centuries the very spirit of the Crusades had been reincarnated into an actual living being.[1] From an even greater distance than the followers of Richard the Lion-Hearted had journeyed, carrying their swords to the Holy Land, had many of these soldiers come from lands across the sea which had then been undiscovered, to fight a battle of right. Soon, too, the very spirit of these Crusades was to take possession of millions of other soldiers from America's shores. What matter if our first contingents were incompletely trained and lonesome strangers in a far-off land? What matter, too, if one of those boys, weary of his long voyage and unacclimated, fell in a faint from the ranks of his comrades as they marched to the Lafayette ceremonies at Picpus Cemetery? Indeed, it was General Pershing himself who, some time later, referring to the scene, laughingly said to me: "Yes, the boys looked and marched all right, but I cannot tell what would have happened if more had been required of them."

But the world knows now the marvellous potentiality that lay in those very men.

Ambassador Sharp to President Wilson.

Paris, *August* 24, 1917.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

Although there has occurred nothing that is startlingly important or out of the ordinary course of events since the

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ment with them, in order not to place upon French war manufactories an additional burden. After the stress of the German Spring drive in 1918, however, men were rushed over without their full equipment, according to the wish of high French military authorities. For the insistence of General Foch and the Supreme War Council to this effect, and the objections of General Pershing as expressed at the Abbeville Conference in May, 1918, and also the appeal of Arthur J. Balfour in his cable dated March 26, 1918, see *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. III, Chapter XIV.

[1] "The intervention of the United States had the character of a crusade. They came to France to defend the cause of Right and to prevent old Europe

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arrival of the American troops, yet I have thought, at this time when the actual participation of our forces at the front may soon commence, that I might well give you some of the conclusions which have been forced upon me.

My letter also may serve the purpose of correcting certain false impressions as to conditions affecting the morale of the French people, which I believe grow out of too much generalizing from wholly exceptional incidents. At the outset—in one sentence, may I say to you that America need have no concern as to the steadfast loyalty, co-operation, and fixedness of purpose of France to "stand by her guns"; enormous losses of men and destruction of property have much weakened her strength, but have not lessened her courage, nor faith in her cause.

Perhaps I may sum up the general situation here by saying that, in all but the satisfaction which decided military successes could give from marked material advances, the conditions here are as favorable as could be expected, after such a supreme and long-endured test as France has stood in the face of such a powerful enemy. If there were strong grounds for the hope that the aggressive attacks of the Allies on the Western Front would, before the end of many months, result in ridding French soil from that enemy, one might indeed well feel free from any sense of concern.

It is true that from time to time Socialistic agitators have, by making a noise, sought to disturb the public confidence in the stability of the Government, and to weaken the purpose of prosecuting the war to a finish;[1] also that the influences of such movements have resulted at times in fomenting labor troubles, causing strikes in munition factories and some disaffection among the troops—though in this latter case

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from falling under the yoke of German autocrats. Their Government might have laid down conditions for this, but it did not do so." Emile Laloy, *Mercure de France*, July 1, 1929.

[1] Premier Ribot had said at the Chamber, May 22, 1917: "When the German people, to whom we do not deny the right to develop like any other, understand the truth, peace can more readily be obtained. That is what is said in Washington as in Petrograd, and that is what is in the heart of the French Democracy." See *Journal Officiel de la République Française*, May 23, 1917.

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undoubtedly other causes had much to do with inciting mutinous conduct. All this manifestation was at its height about two months ago. At the time, the influence of German money was suspected, and the presence of pro-German instigators from Spain and elsewhere was well known. Since then, proof positive has been secured of the use of German money to corrupt one of the French journals, which was loudest in its denunciation of the Government and the prosecution of the war, and the arrest of the editor and his suicide in prison are events of the last few days.[1]

Speaking with M. Viviani, Minister of Justice, while this agitation was at its height, he told me that it possessed no weight or influence, and that such agitation—to use his own simile—was like the waves of the ocean that, while more or less constantly in action, generally found their level, and the efforts of the advanced Socialistic elements in France would subside because there was no intelligent public sentiment at the back of them.

Certainly everyone—even those not so friendly to the Government—is perfectly willing to agree that general conditions, as they affect not alone the morale of the people but their attitude toward the Government, have much improved during the past few weeks. Undoubtedly the opportune arrival of the American troops under General Pershing had a splendid effect in helping to bring about this result. Arriving as they did, just at the height of this agitation and following the disappointment growing out of the lack of success in the big offensive movement, with heavy losses to the French troops, and especially the gloom succeeding the Russian defection, this event was psychological.

As to the feeling toward the Government itself, it is quite generally predicted that there will be a radical change in the Ministry upon the reassembling of Parliament in the Fall, and according to prevalent opinion, M. Painlevé, the present

[1] Almereyda, of the *Bonnet Rouge*, found strangled by a shoestring in his bed at the Fresnes prison infirmary, August 14, 1917. The business manager of this paper, Duval, was condemned to death and executed by the firing squad.

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Minister of War, will take M. Ribot's place as President of the Council.[1]

Happily, despite all jealousies, there has been a remarkable unanimity on the part of Parliament, the Ministry, and the more enlightened class of the people, in favor of prosecuting the war to a successful conclusion, and all factions vie with each other in their patriotic devotion to the country.

However, much could be written of rumors given more or less currency affecting this or that man's public acts, supposed intrigues to displace this or that General, and even the members of the Government themselves are quite free to express their opinion of the lack of wisdom of this or that public measure. But I suppose such conditions are, after all, only the evidence that human nature is working pretty much in the normal way.

I may say for your encouragement that it is my firm conviction that neither the Government, Army, nor people of France will shrink from continuing to face with the utmost courage and unanimity the problems which this war imposes. The Press of Paris, as well as of the entire country, voices this unanimity in defence of a common cause in such a manner, I am sure, as has never been witnessed in the Press of our country. The intervention of the United States in the war has done more than merely give the French people encouragement, it has been accepted by them as the absolutely necessary factor to the success of the Allies. I have myself for a long time past shared that same opinion. A stalemate would have otherwise resulted.

This observation brings me quite appropriately to the second part of my letter, which I will devote to some of my own conclusions growing out of the methods employed by the opposing forces on both land and sea, for I have some strong convictions which, instead of being shaken by all the events that have preceded, have only confirmed me in their accuracy—if I may be pardoned for expressing such conceit.

[1] This prevision was justified by the formation of the Painlevé Cabinet, September 13–November 16, 1917, followed by the Clemenceau Cabinet. M. Ribot remained as Minister of Finance in the Painlevé Cabinet until October 23, when he was replaced by M. Louis Barthou.

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In a letter which I wrote to you at the beginning of the year,[1] I took occasion to refer to the three chief factors which up to that time had resulted in prolonging the war and which gave promise of continuing it indefinitely, unless one or more of them were modified or wiped out altogether. These were: first, the equality in men and resources of the two contending forces; second, the resort to trench fighting; third, the use of the aeroplane, rendering surprise movements by either side practically impossible.

Without going into the consideration of the manner in which they have operated to bring about this result, I can only say that at the end of three years of almost constant activity, particularly on the Western Front, these same conditions are still present and all-important; so much so that if I did not believe that there was a way of overcoming this impasse, created especially by the trench system of warfare, I would become very pessimistic as to the prospect.

Even the augmentation, though critically necessary, of several hundred thousand of our own brave boys fighting at the front in those trenches cannot result for a considerable time in doing more than maintain the equilibrium for the Allies. For unhappily, their poor bodies are not any more immune from bursting shells than those of their French and British brothers who fight by their side; and, as it has been almost from the start a machine war, personal valor, dash, and skill have not counted so much as in previous wars. If the first and second line of trenches of the enemy have been taken, it is only to know that back of the third yet to be taken are endless series of other trenches with their barbed wire entangling barriers.

Under past and present methods of waging this war on land, I long ago came to the conclusion that only the practical giving out of Germany's raw material for guns and ammunitions would cause her early defeat. Fortunately, there seems to be some reliable evidence of her serious need in that respect. The food situation in that country, from what I can learn, does not seem to be now any more acute than a year ago, with the harvests of the autumn to tide them over into another year. The line of

[1] January 12, 1917.

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those trenches cannot, then, be materially changed—though all advances are bound to be in favor of the Allies.

In making this statement, I am aware that the news of the past week or two—not only coming from the Italian Front but also from Verdun, from the French attacks, and from the North of France from the British advance—has been very encouraging, and a considerable number of prisoners have been taken; yet, it is only perhaps from the latter direction, where the British troops are staking everything in a mighty assault on a scale not before attempted in the war, that there seems to be a prospect of material and permanent results.

In this connection Lord Murray told me a fortnight ago that some of his friends, Generals in the British Army, had just informed him while he was at the front that it was to be a supreme test as to whether, with an unprecedented amount of ammunition at their back and the biggest guns, they could force the Germans back and across Belgium; the particular object being to recover Ostend and Zeebrugge, two of the important bases of the German submarines. He said that six or seven weeks of such campaigning must decide the issue for this year's offensive.

But out of it all there is, in my judgment, a way to inflict such damage upon the German forces as to make it impossible for them to retain their ground. This is pre-eminently through an overwhelming superiority and mastery of the aerial arm of warfare, and nothing has given me more satisfaction than to learn through the despatches during the past few weeks that America has come at last to realize this fact. Could the Allies at this time have 10,000 additional armed aeroplanes, with expert pilots on the Western Front—20,000 would prove still more decisive—I would look for a débâcle amounting to almost a collapse of the opposition, resulting in rapid and marked advances on the part of our forces.

What would follow such a pronounced advantage in our aeroplane strength is too obvious to need any elaboration. This, then, is clearly the most important duty of our Government, and with our abundance of steam power and factory output we ought soon to furnish to our Allies this needed support. The chronicle of every day's fighting emphasizes its importance.

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In the same way, though of different application in its use, aircraft can be used to great advantage in naval warfare. It is with the rather vain satisfaction which comes to the man who can say "I told you so" that I recalled to Admiral Cleaves, when he was recently in Paris, my statement made in a speech in Congress five years ago on the first day of this month,[1] upon the future use of the aeroplane, that the cost of one modern battleship would be enough to construct a thousand hydroplanes, and he said to me that he would be very glad indeed to trade off one of our battleships for such an aerial fleet.

While Admiral Jellicoe, at the recent Inter-Allied Conference held in this city, expressed to me the greatest appreciation for the efficient help of our cruisers over on this side of the water in protecting the merchant vessels, yet I believe that if the war is to continue well into another year, our American Naval genius will find a way in which to overcome the serious menace caused by the submarine—not merely by convoying ships and protecting them from attack, but in the more effective way of destroying them at their source of egress, or at least preventing them leaving their base. Ingenuity, boldness, and dash—which qualities I am forced to believe the British Navy, with all its superiority in ships, has greatly lacked—will be brought to bear on the problem.[2]

* * * * * *

In my intercourse with all my diplomatic colleagues, it has been a source of exceeding gratification to me to note the unmeasured confidence which they place in the unselfish purpose of America, and the wisdom and strength with which you have set forth her position.

With high personal respect,

I am, dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

[1] August 1, 1912.

[2] For the work of the American and the British Navies see respectively *The Victory at Sea*, by Rear-Admiral W. S. Sims, in collaboration with Burton J. Hendrick; and *The Grand Fleet 1914–1916*, by Admiral Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa, also *The World Crisis* by Winston Churchill.

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The Peace Note addressed by Pope Benedict XV to the Belligerent Powers on August 1, 1917, had been unfavourably received. The chief reasons given for the attitude of the French Government were that the Pope in no way recognized the difference, from a moral standpoint, between the aggressor and those who had been so grievously wronged, and that to accept a peace on the general terms proposed by the Pope would be to allow an enemy to remain substantially in full possession of his power and resources, which would offer the temptation, at an opportune moment, to renew hostilities against the weakened countries of the smaller and less powerful Allies. The fact that so much was left unsaid in the appeal, as to defining and confirming the rights of these smaller Powers, also condemned it.

At the Foreign Office I was told that a telegram had been received from the French Ambassador at Petrograd to the effect that Tereschenko, the Russian Premier, had just announced to him his disapproval of the communication of the Pope, and had referred to it in most bitter terms.

The opinion was expressed that the overture was chiefly made through the solicitation of the Austro-Hungarian Government. The Emperor and Empress, being devoted Catholics, naturally felt an additional interest in having the Pope make an intercession, in addition to the fact that the very serious economic conditions of the country were well known. The opinion was further expressed that the German Government would never offer any definite terms of peace until forced by arms to do so but that, consistent with its practice in the past, it would seek to draw out expressions from the Allied Powers, from which course it might gain some possible advantages.

President Wilson's able reply in date of August 29, 1917, therefore exactly met the situation in accordance with the desires of the Allies.[1]

It has been my firm conviction that Germany missed her greatest opportunity to win the war by not striking earlier before the American troops began to land in great numbers.

[1] "Wilson's answer to the Pope is splendid. He said what we would not have ventured to say about the Emperors and the ruling authorities of the Central Empires." *The Diary of Lord Bertie*, August 31, 1917.

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Had the impetuosity and surprising advances of the German forces, made in the Spring of 1918, occurred six months earlier, it is more than likely that a different story of the war would have had to be told. At least Germany would have put herself in such a position of advantage as to make her defeat much more difficult and of much more prolonged effort. Even eight months after our entrance into the war, only a small proportion of those we had landed on French soil were sufficiently trained for actual fighting.

It would almost seem that those in high authority in Germany and in control of her army really believed that America's entrance into the war was not of great importance. And yet, before the last and desperate Spring attacks of the German army had been made, we were already sending upwards of 250,000 men each month—a number which, great as it was, steadily increased in the months to follow. But these attacks, attended as the first few were by sensational gains of territory, had already begun to encounter a new force—our own matchless American troops which distinguished themselves with such undying heroism at Château-Thierry, as also at Soissons, at St. Mihiel, and in the forests of Argonne. I have heard from the lips of no less an authority than Marshal Foch himself that they were necessary to win the war.

It was General Pershing who said to me, some weeks before my leaving Paris, that he could not have our American boys return home with any other thought in their mind than that, with all due praise to the valour of their associates in arms, the French soldiers—and there are no better—and their British brothers, it was to their own valour as well that the winning of the war was due.

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CHAPTER XI

PARIS UNDER FIRE

FEW on our side of the water, in those critical days, came to realize how close the danger was to Paris. Not at any time within the entire four years following the retreat of the Germans over the battlefield of the Marne, was the enemy at his nearest point of approach more distant from Paris than sixty miles in a bee-line. On a number of occasions, even long after his nearest approach in the early days of September, 1914, he was but little more than half that distance away.

During many months of the war the reproach of Clemenceau, as a member of the Opposition, uttered in criticism of existing war Ministries, that "Noyon is still in the hands of the enemy," became famous. And yet Noyon is not distant from Paris more than an eighty-minutes ride in a motor-car. The armies of Germany were still forming a mighty wedge with its apex pointing to Paris. But the valour of the Allied armies had kept the invading horde away from the capital, along the line of an arc extending in approximately equal distances from Rheims, westerly through Noyon, to Ham.

From back of these lines came often successive nightly raids over Paris from the powerful German air-craft. Later, the amazing achievement of sending over into the city deadly shells, from long-range cannon located upwards of seventy-five miles away, was to startle the world.

While volumes of printed matter have appeared in American papers descriptive of great battles and minor military engagements, yet perhaps less has been made public of these attacks on Paris, both at night and by day, from these two engines of war. The reason is obvious. The censorship, never probably more justified than in such cases, not only prevented more than the merest mention of air-raids and long distance bombard-

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ments being made in the Paris Press, but the dissemination of such knowledge abroad by more than the briefest mention was also prohibited. The enemy must not know of the success of his attacks; he must not know to what extent he inflicted damage either to property or life, neither must he learn what particular part of the city was stricken.[1]

The Embassy was kept informed of the truth through the courtesy of the Government, yet the people themselves were permitted to know only the visitation of such attacks as came in their immediate vicinity. For many months Paris was to all intents and purposes in the firing line of battle, though not actually in the front trenches. Only a remarkably active and skilful plan of defensive barrage firing, inaugurated by the military authorities, saved the city from far greater loss of life, and perhaps from destruction of property through conflagrations that would have been appalling.

Particularly deplorable was the raid of German aeroplanes on Thursday night, January 31, 1918, in which approximately fifty were killed and upwards of two hundred wounded. This being the first air-raid over Paris for a long time, people had begun to look upon the city as being quite immune from such danger. The damage to property, the loss of life, exceeded those of any previous raid by Zeppelins or aeroplanes.

The Paris Press was unanimous in not only bitterly denouncing such murderous warfare upon an unfortified place, but the feeling was voiced that such attacks would serve to give new strength and determination to France to carry the war into Germany.

As long as I live I shall never forget the warning alarm sounded by the sirens throughout the city, usually indicating from fifteen minutes to half an hour in advance the approach

[1] A note annexed to Mr. Sharp's manuscript gives the following figures: Years 1914–1917, bombs dropped by German aeroplanes in Paris exclusive of suburbs: 1914, 45; 1915, 70; 1916, 61; 1917, 14. Year 1918: bombs from Zeppelins and aeroplanes, 228, resulting in 206 killed, 392 wounded: Big Bertha shells, 169, resulting in 196 killed, 417 wounded. There were furthermore "several thousand" air-raids over other French regions, in addition to the deaths and damages caused by the marine guns trained on Dunkirk, Bergues, Nancy, etc.

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of these nightships of death. Only the frequency of their visits served in time to rob them of the terror which might otherwise have been inspired. Indeed, familiarity with such dangers came to breed the proverbial contempt for them. But that it was a contempt often born of imprudence, the long list of fatalities to those who lingered in the streets or in open doorways, or who persisted in refusing to leave top-story apartments, amply proved. While appeals of warning appearing in the Press gave repeated instructions to the people as to what precautions to take after the alarm was sounded, yet they were only too often unheeded.

The siren call quite generally was the signal for a hasty retreat on the part of the prudent to the thousands of "*abris*" —basements or cellars of residences—throughout the city. This means of safety was systematized to such an extent that, adjoining all outside entrance-ways to retreats recommended because of their safety were posted placards showing the number of people they would accommodate. Even under such stress of enforced imprisonment and danger, human nature asserted itself in providing for amusements of various kinds, including a liberal supply of gramophones and the irrepressible joker.

That the enemy had in contemplation a much more destructive plan, to be put into execution through these nightly air-raids, seems to admit of no doubt. More powerful machines capable of carrying greater-sized bombs were being constructed. The feelings which Lord Reading, in a speech on one occasion, so graphically described as existing among the people of London, who breathed a sigh of relief at the coming of cloudy and stormy nights as the only safe protection from these murderous air-raids, had their counterpart in Paris.

The most beautiful moonlight nights, indeed, came to be looked upon with a feeling of the gravest concern. Rarely, if ever, were such nights free from the aerial raids of the enemy. Time and again I have seen, from the large windows of my sleeping apartment facing the north-east, the most brilliant pyrotechnic display from exploding shells of the barrage fire from a hundred guns, accompanied by the signal light of our

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Allied machines, rivalling at times in brilliancy an electric headlight of a railway locomotive. Strange, weird beyond description amidst the roar of cannon, were those never-to-be-forgotten scenes. Now and then a heavier and more earth-shaking detonation would be heard, and I knew that that sound came not from cannon, but from one of the great explosive bombs dropped from some German machine at great height. I knew also that the chances were at that instant largely in favour of some building being in whole or in part destroyed, with its occupants writhing in the pains of death. As many as sixty hostile bombing machines have come over Paris in a single night. While a few never returned to the German lines, yet a large percentage of them did, unfortunately, leaving behind them a trail of destruction and death. Within fifteen minutes of such raids, I have seen the horizon lighted up for miles about with the great conflagrations caused by the explosion of inflammatory bombs.

But great as was this method of destruction by night, by far the gravest concern, if not the most real danger, was caused by the shells of the long range guns—or "Big Berthas," as they came to be called.

Clearly one of the most unique incidents which occurred, during a war so crammed full of strange situations, was the sudden appearance in the midst of the Parisians of this new instrument of death, even if it did not lead to any considerable events from a military point of view. Very much as though some strange visitation from the planet Mars, bringing death in its pathway, had suddenly intruded upon the streets of the city, fell the first shell of this great German gun. People were stupefied at what, in its very suddenness and the terror of its work, only differed from some horrible apparition in that it could not be seen. By those who later at different times happened to be very near the places where these shells fell, it was stated that there was not the slightest sound made by them in passing through the air. They simply dropped from space like some huge meteorite, without its warning trail of light, which had been charged with the highest explosives that the science of man could invent. Such testimony would certainly

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seem to be borne out in part by the shape of the shell, which had a much-elongated funnelled nose, equal in length to half of that of the entire shell.

On that momentous twenty-third of March, explosions as of bombs of unusual size were heard in Paris at frequent and fairly regular intervals, from about eight o'clock in the morning until about the middle of the afternoon. Certain lines of the tramways stopped and many stores were closed. The general explanation was that German air-raids were in progress over Paris by daylight, for the first time since the beginning of the war. The bombs dropped in different parts of the city were reckoned at thirty at least, there being a number of killed and wounded.

The explanation was given in a communiqué published at 5 p.m. by *Le Temps*, among other papers. I telegraphed to Washington as follows:

Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

March 23, 1918.

The following remarkable official communication appeared in the Paris Press of this evening: "The enemy has fired on Paris with a long-distance gun, since eight this morning, every quarter of an hour, and forty shells have reached the capital and suburbs. There are ten dead and about fifteen wounded. Means to combat the enemy gun are in the course of execution."

Below this official communication in brackets follows this comment: "Let us add to the official explanation which has just been read, that the shortest distance from the front to Paris is more than one hundred kilometers."

As I am dictating this telegram, a night raid is again in progress. If this official communication states the truth, it would appear undoubtedly that the German aeroplanes seen at a great height over Paris to-day were for observation purposes to see the effect of the firing of the big gun and to determine the accuracy of its range. Also if the communication is accurate it marks the events of this day in warfare among the most remarkable and interesting that have occurred since the beginning of the war, and puts the south coast of England

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within easy range of similar big guns that may be located near Ostend.

While the whole thing seems incredible, yet the War Office confirms the fact that the shells were fired by a great gun located at Crépy, fully 120 kilometers from here or over 75 miles. The War Office states further that it has been known for some time past that emplacements were being built there for some kind of gun.

SHARP.

There were many indeed who believed, for some hours after those shells first began to fall, that they came from cunningly concealed positions of the enemy at not more than twenty or twenty-five miles from the city. Just how and by what assumption they came to be located fully forty miles within the known line of the nearest enemy trenches, they did not attempt to explain. It is safe to say, however, of such people that horrible thoughts of underground tunnels, ingeniously constructed by Germans, and, even worse yet, a traitorous betrayal of confidence, must have taken possession of them. Indeed, in a conversation with me at dinner, the night of the first day of this new kind of bombardment, one French gentleman, who had been entrusted by the Government with important duties connected with the "camouflage" service, ridiculed the idea that it could come from guns located upwards of seventy-five miles away. "Such a thing is impossible!" he exclaimed with much vehemence. He was sure that the shells had been fired from concealed positions comparatively near the city.

Another belief, quite as current as it was unfounded, was that invisible aeroplanes or other aircraft had dropped bombs upon the city from a great height. Indeed, by many this was at first accepted as an almost necessary conclusion, so astounding was the theory that these messengers of death, coming in the form of high explosive shells of several hundred pounds in weight, could be fired by any cannon, however great the calibre, from a distance of four score miles. And yet the skies were unusually clear that day, and no semblance of any aircraft was seen.

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Having in mind the results of the longest range guns heretofore known to even the most modern conceptions of ballistic theories, the record of range being multiplied nearly three times was something too far beyond the average mind to conceive. Of course, as was to be expected, there were not those lacking to come forward almost immediately and assert that, after all, there was nothing in this achievement beyond the possibilities already known to science. One was complacently told that given a gun large enough, with a sufficient charge of high explosives, the proper form of rifling, and a certain shape of projectile, there was really nothing remarkable about it; an assurance, under the circumstances, more enlightening than comforting.

There would seem to be little doubt that the faith of the Germans in being able to cast terror among the people of Paris, thus impairing their morale for resistance, was quite as great as their exultation over springing such a surprise upon their Allied foes. But their hopes were as though built on shifting sands. Aged men, women, and children were mangled, bleeding, and dying there in numbers who, but a moment before, had been in the full enjoyment of life. But the continuance of such scenes served only to intensify the feelings of abhorrence among the people of an unfortified city so exposed to indiscriminate slaughter. It all only tended to steel their determination not to yield. That, however, a feeling of depression pervaded the city, not lessened by the belief in the probability of a more intensive long-distance bombardment by the emplacement of many additional guns, cannot be denied. With these shells dropping through the day, and night raids by bombing aeroplanes, the enemy, during those critical months from March to July, 1918, was surely resorting to his last desperate means for forcing France to capitulate through a demoralization of her people.

Their repetition at regular and frequent intervals soon awakened the Paris population to the fact that they had a new element of danger against which it was impossible to offer any resistance, unless in some manner the means were forthcoming to destroy the guns themselves.

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That at least one or two of them—for it is doubtful if more than a half-dozen of such long-range guns were used by the enemy—were destroyed or put out of commission by Allied airmen seems to be certain. For the next four months, however, this new terror had to be reckoned with.

When this intensive bombarding, in the manner I have described, had brought the populace again face to face with a peril which their remaining in the city could in no way mitigate, there began again an evacuation by great numbers of women and children, as in the early days of the war. This movement was given impetus by the success of the first and second advance of the German Armies when they again, by the degree of their successes, seriously threatened the ability of the Allied troops to hold Paris. How great was the concern at that time, the outside world knew but little. Indeed, the greatest secrecy as to the Government's plans was maintained by those in authority, lest an unwarranted panic should take possession of the populace.

Just what political advantages might also be grasped by those in opposition to the Government was another thing to be reckoned with. To add to the danger, for months there had been rumours of intrigue, and even treason. Men of one-time prominence in the Government were under suspicion. Others had already been arrested. But for the fixedness of faith in the ultimate strength of the Allied coalition, that anxiety would have resulted, at this crucial hour, in dismay bordering on panic. But somehow, from the man in the street up to the highest official of the Government, there was a faith, deeply implanted, that the power that would be opposed to the enemy, should he seek to make the final lap in his advance, would be all-sufficient. That was before Château-Thierry. After that epochal event, everybody knew that the enemy's greatest effort to reach Paris had irretrievably failed. The initial effort of America's might had at last been brought into play. I have wondered whether the full significance of this fact was perceived first by our Allies or by the enemy.

At no time during the war were there displayed in a more favourable light the poise and stability of those in the French

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Government. They were constantly prepared to meet every emergency.

While the crisis was most acute, I cabled to the State Department as follows:

"I would say on the whole that the morale of the people is all that could be desired. It is indeed incredible that a hostile force of not less than 500,000 men massed in one sector but forty miles away on a restricted battlefront, desperately seeking to break through to attain the goal, the result of which they must believe would win the war, excites so little alarm. The confidence which the people have come to repose in the strategy of General Foch explains this, as do also the bravery of his soldiers and the crowning element of confidence in the splendidly demonstrated valor of the American fighters, used so effectually within the past fortnight to help block the passes to Paris. I may not be stating it too strongly when I say that it has come to be a settled conviction that these are the factors in this war against which the Germans can never prevail."

During the most critical of these days, as I was the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, a number of my colleagues came to consult me as to the best course to pursue. I learned that the British Embassy, some days before, had taken occasion to warn all British subjects living in Paris to leave the city as soon as possible. The citizens of neutral countries alone felt any degree of immunity from harm in case of the taking of the city. But even they were powerless to escape in the event of active bombardment by the enemy. On more than one occasion, rumours were in circulation that the diplomatic representatives of these countries had been warned of an impending bombardment by the Germans. If so, I can vouch for the fact that the secret was well kept.

The responsibility placed upon me towards the Americans still sojourning in considerable numbers in Paris in such an emergency can be well imagined. It became a question how to pass the word to those whose services were not necessarily employed, in one way or another, in needed relief work. Manifestly, it would not do to give the slightest intimation through the Press, even if it would pass the censorship. Such

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action would tend to provoke a panic, and besides, serve to apprise the enemy of the state of feelings in the city. Neither did it seem advisable to send out personal letters to those American residents whose names and addresses we could ascertain.

At a time when no one knew what another hour might bring forth, I called in a number of prominent Americans connected with organizations of one kind or another, including both my Military and Naval Attachés. I laid before them the situation, and asked for suggestions as to the best way of informing our countrymen of the true situation. Tentative steps were at the same time taken to provide hotel accommodation in cities to the south for those who might, through limited time, be unable to secure them. One of my most capable aides, as he was also my much esteemed friend, was the late Lieutenant-Commander Chas. O. Maas, of the Naval staff of my Embassy. He had been a prominent member of the New York bar, and had left a lucrative practice to give his services to his country. Brave as a lion himself, he seemed, nevertheless, very greatly concerned over the fate that might await those Americans who tarried too long in Paris. Hardly a day passed without his coming to my office to tell me of the increasing need of getting notice to our people to leave the city. On one of these occasions he said:

"Mr. Ambassador, I suppose you have carefully weighed the chances of the Germans getting into Paris, but it seems to me no time should be lost in notifying our fellow-Americans to leave the city." Then followed a declaration which, understanding his big-heartedness and good will toward me as I did, I knew he disliked to make: "The British Ambassador, several days ago, caused notice to be sent out to every British subject in Paris to leave the city as soon as possible. I have heard that they have already chartered boats down the Seine to Havre."

Months afterwards he came into my office and, referring to the anxiety which he had felt in those days, he said: "I want to take off my hat to the coolest man in Paris, when so many about him seemed to have lost their heads."

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It was a great sadness for me, a number of months after I had returned to America, to learn of the untimely death of Lieutenant-Commander Maas, from a sudden attack of pneumonia while in the midst of a most useful work in France. By direction of Secretary Daniels, his body was brought to America and buried in Arlington with all naval honours.

In a comprehensive account written for the Navy Department, giving the history of the Naval Attaché's work in Paris during the war, the Lieutenant-Commander has made a valuable contribution to the Government's archives. Referring to the grave situation confronting the Embassy in the most critical time resulting from the great German advances, he has written:

"The particularly critical period which marked the summer of 1918 was accentuated by the intensifying of the relations between the Ambassador and this office. When hundreds of thousands of people left the city of Paris in June of that year, when the city was being scorched every night by enemy air-raids and blistered every day by enemy shells, when the morale was growing lower and lower, when the French Government and the French banks had removed their important papers and securities, when it looked every day as if the siege of Paris was imminent, Ambassador Sharp at no moment lost his fine sense of the fitness of things, nor did he at any moment regard the situation except with the utmost confidence, and in the firm belief that the Germans would never desecrate with their presence this beautiful capital. . . . It is interesting to note how some Americans viewed the situation on the question of their departure, and particular reference is made to some of the ladies who were seen. Many of them insisted that the last thing they would do in all their lives would be to leave the city, as they would never care to look the world in the face again after having thus been branded as cowards. One elderly lady, whom the writer saw, refused to leave upon the ground that her canary-bird had just given birth to a young one and that it would be worse than murder to leave the mother and bird, even at this critical period."

At the height of the crisis, when it became apparent that the

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ensuing forty-eight hours might decide the fate of this last desperate attempt of the Germans to take Paris, Major Barclay Warburton, Military Attaché of the Embassy, came in to confer with me as to the best means for securing military motor-trucks to transport to a place of safety the records and other documents making up the archives of the Embassy.[1] The relations between the Embassy and General Pershing had always been such that every reasonable request had only to be made, to be granted. I told Major Warburton that I would be very pleased to lay his request before the General.

In making this promise, I had the purpose in mind to acquaint General Pershing with my own views of the situation, and to get his in return. While stating in my letter the possible need of action of the promptest kind, and seconding Major Warburton's request, yet I assured the General that my own personal opinion was that no such need would arise, as the Germans would never enter Paris. Within the briefest conceivable time, I received a very cordial reply from General Pershing, promising that in event of actual need of the camions, I had but to call for them to have them at my service. But best of all, I was pleased to receive from him the assurance that he concurred fully in my own views of the situation. At the same time, he fully approved of the precautions being taken by me.

Happily, an event transpired which gave the coveted opportunity of passing the word to many Americans living in Paris without creating any alarm, and free from any publicity. The Department of State had cabled that it was desirous of having a new register secured of all Americans sojourning in France. The primary object was to obtain a safeguard against the issuance of passports to suspicious persons. By thus giving public notice to all Americans to present themselves at the

[1] At this juncture I put myself at the disposal of Ambassador Sharp, offering to remain as guardian of the Embassy buildings and of such records as might have to be left. I argued that being infirm, my presence was more apt to be tolerated by the Germans than that of a valid man, and if my life were to be forfeited it would have less value than that of any single American physically able to go into line and fight. W. D.

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Passport Bureau, between certain hours on the specified days for the purpose of registration, an opportunity was afforded for the members of the staff to suggest diplomatically that, if there were no special reasons demanding their presence in Paris, it might be advisable, under the circumstances, to leave the city for a time. I had directed those whose duty it was to meet persons who came to register to allow them first to introduce the subject which would naturally be uppermost in the minds of everybody at that time—that of the wisdom of leaving the city. In the majority of cases, I learned afterwards that this very thing happened; most of the callers lost no time in raising the question themselves.

The intensified bombardment of the city, which was being carried on night and day, made it seem to many that a new advance by the enemy at any moment was not at all improbable. It should be remembered that nothing had as yet occurred to forecast a decisive check to his attacks. On the two previous advances, he had planted his positions well in front of those previously held by him. A third attack was known to be imminent; everything seemed to point to its being directed toward Paris rather than Calais.

I have yet to recall a single instance where there was an attempt on the part of any American to misuse the knowledge imparted to him. Each visitor who came to the Passport Bureau was made to understand the gravity of the situation and the necessity for a calm attitude. It is true that now and then one was encountered whose presence in the city was perhaps the least needed of all, who, nevertheless, asserted his or her determination to stick it out to the last moment. Such people seemed unmindful of the fact that, if many others were of the same frame of mind, it would be impossible to find conveyances to take them from the city at a moment when hundreds of thousands would be seeking the same gates of egress. I was told on good authority that at one time as many as ten thousand trunks had accumulated in one of the great stations whose routes led to the south. Every outgoing train was crowded to the limit with passengers.

Already the Government had taken steps to remove from the

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city some of the most important war industries. Too late, the mistake had been realized of locating in Paris more than fifty per cent. of such factories. M. André Citroën, one of the proprietors of a great shell industry, told me that he had informed the Government, in answer to its question as to his ability to move his works, that it would require three thousand railway cars to transport the machinery alone. The time was so pressing that this would mean, he said, the necessity of placing at his disposal two hundred cars a day. Doubtless the same conditions existed among many other munition plants about the city.

Added to this concern was that caused by the tremendous explosion at La Courneuve, in the early afternoon of March 15, where great quantities of munitions had been stored. Two heavy concussions, one quickly following the other, had shaken the whole city. When I visited the scene the next day, it looked as though a cyclone had swept over nearly a square mile of territory, the buildings having caved in like so many egg-shells. The loss of many lives and the complete destruction of the property had resulted. It was said that the careless dropping of hand grenades by some of the workmen had produced the detonation which had caused the catastrophe. But if this were true, what might not a series of bombs from an invading squadron of aeroplanes do over a great city, where many other such magazine stores and factories existed?

It was M. Loucheur,[1] at the time Minister of Armaments, who declared to me that such a condition ought never again to menace his country in time of war. I know from conversations with him that for weeks following the first advance of the enemy in the Spring of 1918 he had busily engaged himself in taking measures to remove quickly much of the valuable machinery in the munition plants about Paris. Tentative plans had also been made for the removal of important bureaus

[1] Louis Loucheur, Under-Secretary of State for War Manufactories 1916–1917, Minister of Armaments 1917–1920, title changed to "Industrial Reconstruction" after the Armistice. Minister of the Liberated Regions 1921, Minister of Commerce 1924, Minister of Finance 1925, Minister of Labour 1928–1929.

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of the Government, and even the entire Government itself, if necessary, to the south of France. Clermont-Ferrand was the location most favourably looked upon if such action became imperative.

In a previous chapter,[1] I have told my readers of the unhappy scenes at the Louvre during the memorable days of the battle of the Marne. A duplication of such scenes was now, after four years, again taking place in some of the public buildings, and indeed in some of the finest private homes in Paris.

This condition was mournfully brought home to me on one occasion when, being ushered into one of the salons at the Foreign Office, I saw workmen in the act of taking down the great Gobelins tapestries which adorned the walls. I had been in those rooms a hundred times before, waiting sometimes a few minutes, and at other times longer, for an audience with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I had come to look upon the scenes portrayed by those tapestries, of such exquisite workmanship, as something real and a part of my life in Paris. To this day I can recall with great minuteness those figures representative of French life of a hundred or more years ago. It seemed indeed as though something peculiarly precious to me was being taken out of my life. As I entered the room, neither M. Pichon nor I could refer to the incident; in itself it was all too plain an evidence of the concern which so heavily lay upon everybody's mind. Happily, with the turning of the fortunes of war in a few weeks I again saw these tapestries restored to their former place.

A more personal realization of the gravity of this crisis came when my landlord, M. Bartholoni, called at the Embassy to see if I would be willing to permit him to remove a few of the choicest of his paintings, that they might be taken to a place of greater safety. For some weeks following, in my own salons at the Embassy, there were large vacant gaps here and there on the walls, marking the places where had hung, in their pride, these splendid paintings, among others a Lawrence, a Boucher, and a Greuze.

[1] See Chapter III.

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At a time like this, one's thoughts involuntarily turned to those who from their environment would be most helpless in the face of such appalling dangers. The strong and resourceful could take care of themselves. But what of the children and the invalids who were in the position of being public charges?

It was for the need of such help that my attention was called one day to the hundred or more little children of the Orphelinat des Arts, housed in the environs of Paris under the protecting care of Madame Poilpot—one of God's noblest women. Some months before, in learning of the splendid work which she, though almost blind, was doing for these orphans of the war, I had made a visit with Mrs. Sharp to this interesting place.

It was to me, therefore, that Madame Poilpot's thoughts turned when the possibility of German occupation of Paris, aside from the constant menace from the bombardments by day and night, had reached their height. Quickly plans were made for the removal of the Orphelinat to the seashore. I arranged through American officers for the transportation of these little ones to the train which would take them to their place of safety. I am sure that never was a request of mine, always generously granted by our military officers, more cheerfully complied with than in this case.

Perhaps if one were to analyse the sense of awe, inspired by a feeling of dread rather than of fear, which the frequent visitation of the shells of the long-range guns produced, it would be found that in the unexpectedness and suddenness, as well as the uncertainty of the place of their fall, lay the greatest cause of apprehension. It is true that there was considerable regularity in the length of intervals between the firing when once it commenced, but at what hour would it be renewed, and in what section of the city would the next shell fall? Only their actual coming could tell. At first, a zone varying not greatly in width, covering but one section of the city and extending across the river from the Hôtel de Ville, was the scene of operations. For a number of days, no spot in that ill-fated quarter was immune from these visits of death.

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On one occasion, Mrs. Sharp and I had received invitations to a luncheon given by General and Mrs. Spears of the British Army. Their home was in the very centre of the bombarded district. As the guests assembled—for none would stay away because of such a trivial matter as the possibility of a German shell falling in their midst—probabilities as to when the next bombardment would open up were the subject of conversation.

On our return, I requested my chauffeur to stop at a place where one of these great shells had struck the day before, not far from the place where we had but just lunched. Fortunately, it was one of the few that had exacted no toll of death. Burying its fragments deep at the roots of a large tree, it gave but little evidence of the damage it had inflicted; only the fronts of buildings had been in places gouged out by the bursting fragments.

However, the everyday life of the people had to continue. Except for provision being made to remove school-children to safer localities, there was no interruption of the daily stream of people which thronged the streets. Everyone knew that if these shells could be fired at such a tremendous distance, so as to fall with considerable accuracy within a certain prescribed territory, other sections of the city could likewise be commanded. Such expectation was quickly to be realized.

Within a fortnight after the first series of shots had been fired, those residents living in the section of the city a mile or so to the westward, extending from the vicinity of the Arch of Triumph to the Trocadéro, were to receive their share of attention. In this quarter of the city both the American Embassy and the Chancery were located.

On more than one occasion during a day's bombardment, desiring to minimize the danger as much as possible, I would wait before leaving the Embassy until, hearing the familiar sound of the explosion, I knew a shell had struck somewhere. Knowing that it would be fifteen minutes before another would fall, I utilized this interval in getting to my office, making a practice of walking rather than riding when the weather would permit. As this required about nine or ten minutes, I usually had left some little margin between shells, so to speak.

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On one morning after they had been falling at the usual interval of fifteen or twenty minutes, I received my closest call. Within a few minutes after I had reached the Chancery and had begun the work of the day, I heard a terrific explosion, so violent as to lead me to believe that it had occurred in the closest proximity—perhaps in the very building which our offices occupied. As a matter of fact, a portion of the shell had actually fallen at the curbing directly in front of my office, where a United States Marine stood on guard. Quickly going to the street below, I saw, on looking up the rue de Chaillot, on which the Chancery is located, a crowd of people hurrying along the street. The shell had fallen but a block away.

The harrowing scenes consequent upon the bursting of the shells were never mentioned in the Press, and the public never knew the number killed. One read, however, that after each one of such horrors, President Poincaré, and sometimes M. Clemenceau, would go on errands of mercy to visit the suffering at their homes and in the hospitals. But as I was walking along the narrow street that day I was for the first time brought face to face with the gruesomeness of the situation.

Along the sidewalk and crossing the street I saw aged men and women with little children, hurrying with blanched faces. There was the stillness of death, because indeed there was the reality of death in its most horrible form. Scarcely a word was uttered by those passing by. They seemed to be going away rather than toward the stricken place. Every window was broken in all the stories of the buildings located at the intersection of the two streets where the shell had fallen. Even the massive frames of the big store windows on the corners had been smashed in by the concussion. On the side of the street opposite me a coachman, wounded unto death, was being carried by four men. He had been driving along the street at that moment, and his horse had been disembowelled. Behind him I saw the sidewalk literally running with the blood of others, who had been similarly helped away from this scene of carnage. Among the unfortunates were British soldiers who had been instantly killed as they were passing by. The exact number of killed and wounded I was unable to learn. But

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that it was a repetition of the terrible experience attending the falling of a large majority of these long-range shells in other sections of the city was undoubtedly a fact. Later the same day, another of these huge missiles fell into a busy market place but three blocks away from my office. A number of women attending the stalls were killed and passers-by seriously injured.

One of my servants, walking in front of the Invalides, had seen two soldiers beheaded by one of these shells.

Many of those who, at the first approach of the enemy's bombing machines, fled to their basements, soon compromised with their fears by going down to the first floor of the buildings; then later to the second floor, finally contenting themselves by merely going to the windows of their apartments, and looking out from the top floor at the barrage fire of the Allied guns. The same was true later with the coming of the long-range shells. Yet the danger was always greatest, and the damage most severe, in the upper stories.

On one occasion, finding myself near the Hôtel de Ville just as a terrific explosion was heard from the other side of the river, I asked my chauffeur to proceed as rapidly as possible in the direction whence came the noise. A few minutes later I arrived near the spot where one of these shells had fallen. The street—the Boulevard St. Germain—was densely crowded with people who had been attracted by the explosion. All traffic had been suspended. At the point where the shell had struck, gas from a large main supplying the city was escaping with a great roar, the shell having broken it into many fragments. While the shell had fallen into such a busy thoroughfare, quite miraculously no one had been struck. Yet there was not one of the great throng that did not realize that at almost any moment another shell might strike within their very midst.

The bomb-throwers from the air were equally indiscriminate in their selection of places of attack throughout the city. No section was immune from their visits. That there was, however, a definite intent and purpose to destroy certain monuments as well as buildings, there can be no doubt. This was

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particularly true of the Ministry of War, where M. Clemenceau had his office. The Cathedral of Notre Dame had also been struck by an airman's bomb, and in the very earliest days of the war huge airships had tried to drop bombs upon the Arch of Triumph.

Social functions, such as the propriety of the times permitted, were also sadly disturbed by the nightly air-raids.

One day in the midst of these attacks, I received the following *carte pneumatique* from my colleague M. Dorn Y de Alsua, Minister from Ecuador:

Minister Dorn Y de Alsua to Ambassador Sharp.

Paris, *March* 24, 1918.

The Minister of Ecuador presents his warmest compliments to his Excellency, the Ambassador of the United States of America, and begs him to accept his excuse in not having come to the meeting arranged for yesterday at 3.30. He was at the *gare du Nord*, and because of the bombardment was not able to find any means of locomotion. He is very annoyed and holds himself at the disposition of his Excellency, Mr. Sharp, for the day and the hour which may suit him.

No less valid was the excuse of my colleague Mr. Matsui, the Japanese Ambassador, who within the week following wrote me in his own hand, in excellent English:

Ambassador Matsui to Ambassador Sharp.

7 avenue Hoche,
30*th March*, 1918.

DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR:

When I wrote to you the other day for the luncheon at this Embassy, I did not expect the great event now occurring at the front. But now in view of the great anxiety which everybody feels in regard to the outcome of the pending struggle, I do not think it possible to have a pleasant gathering and if you and Mrs. Sharp will kindly permit me to do so, I want to put off the luncheon for some other better occasion. I have hesitated

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to write you before but I trust you will kindly understand my sentiment.

I remain,
Yours very sincerely,
K. MATSUI.

On one occasion, March 11, I had given a dinner in honour of the Prince of Monaco. A few minutes before the departure of my guests, the unwelcome sound of the *alerte* was heard. To leave the Embassy at that time was to take the chance of death in the streets, while even to remain in the large salons, where we were, was by no means free from danger. After waiting a few minutes, when the defensive barrage fire had gotten under full sway, my guests went down to the floor below, that the danger might be lessened as much as possible. The attack lasting an unusually long time, one guest after another took his departure, and with it his chance of getting safely home.

So full was each day's account of tragic events during this period of the war in particular, that nothing, however unusual in its every phase, seemed to startle Paris. The most notable exception to this statement was the horror of Good Friday, the twenty-ninth day of March, 1918, at the church of St. Gervais, which was occasioned by a shot from one of the long-range guns. The loss in life was indeed so great, the circumstances so tragic, that, in addition, because of the sacred character of the day itself, I felt impelled, in giving an account of this event to the Department of State, to characterize it as the most destructive of any single shot that had been fired by the enemy during the war. It was at the same time most costly in consequences, for it had its echo throughout all Christendom. As the details of this horrible catastrophe came to be known, the list of the dead mounting to nearly one hundred, a wave of indignation and horror swept over the city.

Visiting the church with Mrs. Sharp as soon thereafter as we were permitted, I beheld a scene of wreckage such as would seem inconceivable for a single shell to cause. Striking at a point high in the vaulted roof near the front of the sacred edifice, an almost incredible displacement of the heavy stones

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of solid masonry, of which the columns and arches were constructed, had resulted. Many stones from this débris had fallen upon the heads of the congregation. The destruction of life was appalling, and the scene was that of a veritable shambles. Though all the bodies of the poor unfortunates had by that time been removed, yet in many places on the floor were blood stains of the innocent victims; in places the gruesome sight of human brains could be seen. Rich and poor had gathered there that afternoon, not alone for purposes of worship, but also to hear the organ music for which the church was famed. Among those who lost their lives that day were a number of Americans. The full meaning of the horror was brought nearer to us because some of them at different times had been our guests at the Embassy. One of these, Madame Landon, was a niece of former Vice-President Levi P. Morton, who, in the early '80's, was American Minister to France.

The fact that the Counsellor of the Swiss Legation, M. Stroehlin, together with his wife, met their death at that time created a marked impression upon the public mind. He was not only in the diplomatic service of a neutral Power, but was then engaged in looking after German interests. Many years before, he had been a Secretary of the Swiss Legation at Washington. He was very popular in Paris, and his taking away in this cruel manner came as a great shock to those in diplomatic circles. So horrible indeed had been some of the circumstances connected with the death of M. and Madame Stroehlin, that not until many hours thereafter were the mangled remains of the wife discovered beneath a great pile of fallen stone.

On calling a day or two later upon my colleague, M. Dunant, the Swiss Minister, to express my sympathy, he voiced the greatest indignation at such an act. I am sure that in so doing he echoed the sentiment of not alone the Allied Powers, but of all neutrals. The answer of the German Government, that of necessity it could not direct its shots so as to avoid places of worship, contained in itself its own condemnation. The fruits of such a crime could only in the slightest and most indirect manner be of any military advantage.

A few days later, I attended, with my colleagues of the

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diplomatic corps, the funeral services of these distinguished victims in the Protestant church of the Oratoire. The President of the Republic and Madame Poincaré, and all the Ministers of the French Government, were present. At no similar service during the war had so many representatives of foreign Powers been gathered together. They came to voice by their presence their abhorrence of such methods of warfare, quite as much as to attest their sincere sorrow over the loss of a highly esteemed colleague. The very cause which brought them together united in a common sympathy, for that hour, neutral and Ally.

Similar manifestations of sympathy were made at the services in the rue de Berri Church, at which the pastor, the Reverend Chauncey Goodrich, feelingly spoke in memory of the Americans who had met their death in this sad manner. Some of them had been his own parishioners.

As reflective of the German mind upon this atrocity, one needs but to read comments of the German Press at that time. A few days after this occurrence, there were sent over to me from the Ministry of War, among other despatches taken from the German wireless station at Nauen, for I regularly received such messages, a quotation evidently for purposes of propaganda from one of the leading German papers. After having pointed out that Paris was a fortified camp of primary importance, it had stated:

"It is not bombarded with the object of frightening the civil population, but for military motives. When a fortified town is bombarded every quarter of an hour in the course of the operations of war by enemy artillery, and is thus exposed to damage which makes it necessary to make subterranean shelter for the population, and causes, according to the Parisian papers, the departure of thousands of the wealthier inhabitants, and the Government cannot make up its mind to divest the town of its military character, then it is criminal to allow a population of non-combatant inhabitants to remain in a city from which they cannot make up their minds to depart. When a Government through sheer obstinacy will not remove the seat of authority, and thus exposes the lives of neutral diplomats,

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it thereby assumes full responsibility for what occurs and should at least have sufficient decency not to make use of misfortunes brought about by its own fault for the purposes of propaganda."

A display of arrogance only equalled by the unfeeling absence of any regret for such a tragedy, even though the lives of her own friends were sacrificed in its toll!

It was my good fortune, a year later, to see the emplacement on which one of these huge guns had been erected. Returning in a military car from Rheims to Paris one afternoon, I learned that by making a slight détour, I could visit this interesting place on my way to Château-Thierry and Paris. While there were other similar emplacements on which these long-range guns had been erected, located a considerable distance apart, yet the one which I was now to see was the last which had been put into position. It was undoubtedly the one which had caused the damage to the section of Paris in which I lived, as that was the last part of the city subjected to its fire.

Cunningly placed at the edge of a forest, the site had been selected with the least inconvenience possible for the transportation of this mighty piece of armament. Along the standard gauge railway had been constructed a siding which required, at that particular point, an extension of but a few rods to carry it into the forest. At the end of this siding, and but a short distance from the highway on which I had left my motor, I beheld a remarkable sight.

The first impression was that of the ordinary railroad turntable placed in front of so many of our American railway "roundhouses." Everything was of massive steel construction. Upon the structure resembling the turntable had been placed a superstructure in which were many steel ball-bearings; each ball had a diameter of about seven or eight inches. On this steel framework, standing to a height of several feet above the main platform, the mighty gun had been mounted. Unfortunately, those in charge of it had still sufficient time in which to carry the gun away before the final retreat of their forces. The removal, however, of the emplacement was a different matter. While an attempt had been made to dynamite it, judging from two or three heavy fractures of portions of the steel

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structure, yet it stood before me in practically all its original completeness. The diameter of the turntable, if such it may be called, was approximately thirty-six feet. The massiveness of the riveted steel work was so apparent that one could readily understand the strain which must have been placed upon it each time the gun was fired. It had naturally been pointed exactly in the direction of Paris, which from that point—considerably nearer than that for which another emplacement had been found in the forest of St. Gobain—was estimated to be between fifty-five and sixty miles distant in a bee-line.

Everywhere about the place was seen the thoroughness which characterized German preparation for military operations. Near the gun had been placed extensive underground passage-ways and apartments which might have accommodated a large staff of artillerymen. Steps from the surface led deep down to these quarters, and once they were gained there was perfect immunity from danger or harm. The utmost detail of the art of camouflage had been observed in concealing the location of the gun from Allied airmen. That even the small open space which had been rendered necessary in laying the track into the forest might be concealed as far as possible, trees with their mass of foliage had been cut down and then placed in holes which had been dug along the railway tracks as near the gun itself as was practicable. It would be a keen observer who could detect from any considerable height anything unusual in the appearance of this spot. To such observers it must have appeared as an unbroken forest.

In discussing a few days later the subject of these emplacements with Marshal Joffre, he told me that he had examined them with great interest. He commented upon the infinite patience and prodigious amount of labour which must have been required by the Germans in constructing such massive works.

How many of my readers realize that, during the memorable siege of Paris in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, there were fewer people killed and less destruction of life in the city of Paris than that caused by the air-raids and the shells from the long-distance guns during the Spring and Summer months of

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1918? While in former days German guns were placed at St. Cloud and St. Germain just outside of the city limits, yet in the Great War, from an average distance of fifty miles that enemy was enabled, through the developments which I have just mentioned, to rain by day and night destruction upon the people of the city.

The very fact of the execution of such destruction by such means has furnished in passing the best argument for the ending of all wars. We all know that for many years past it has been claimed that the development of science, especially in the means of destruction by the use of great warships, the submarines, air-planes, and the great guns, had become such that war would become impossible, that the side that got the first shot would annihilate the other. Yet in the face of those predictions we witnessed a war which lasted four years; which resulted in the loss of ten million lives of the best blood of Europe; and of ruin of property which the world cannot pay for in another fifty years.

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CHAPTER XII

FRENCH STATESMEN AND PEACE PROBLEMS

I AM persuaded that neither a reincarnated Danton of the Revolutionary days, nor a Gambetta of the early years of the Third Republic, would find his oratory availing if opposed to the present temper of the French people. The assaults of the most forceful and hostile of the Socialist orators failed to disturb it. It likewise remained unmoved in the face of grave political events—for they were essentially political rather than otherwise—like the Malvy and Caillaux cases.[1]

As a matter of fact, even the phlegmatic German, though of a mentality less keen, is hardly more calm or stoical than the typical Frenchmen to be met with in almost any vocation. Imbued with a high sense of accountability, industrious, thrifty, and provident beyond any people I know, coupled with an inherent love of country, they showed a poise and stability which were a bulwark of strength to the nation in its greatest crisis.

In a conversation with the eminent Dr. Carrel, held in the Summer of 1918, he said to me that while this or that

[1] Louis Malvy, Minister of Commerce 1913–1914, Minister of the Interior 1914–1917, exiled to Spain for five years subsequent to the trial before the Parliamentary High Court of Justice ordered by Premier Clemenceau, Minister of the Interior in the Briand March, 1926 Cabinet.

Joseph Caillaux, Minister of Finance 1899–1902 and 1906–1909, President of the Council 1911–1912, Minister of Finance 1913–1914, sent on a mission to South America in 1915. Tried by order of M. Clemenceau before the Parliamentary High Court of Justice in 1918, he was banished not from France but from Paris and certain other regions for five years, during which he resided at his home in the Sarthe Department. As Minister of Finance in the 1925 Painlevé Cabinet, he went on a mission to America to negotiate on Debts, and concluded with England the Caillaux–Churchill Debt Accord. He was Vice-President of the Council and Minister of Finance in the Briand March 1926 Cabinet.

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particular Ministry might arrogate to itself the credit for successfully meeting the difficulties imposed by the war, yet after all it was the people of France to whom the credit was due. He said that his countrymen were, as a whole, patriotic and liberty-loving, and endowed with a lot of common sense. It was the force of that influence exerted upon Ministries which compelled them to act in harmony and be responsive thereto.

Patriotism and devotion to ideals are not monopolized by any sect, creed, or party in France. That such a spirit must have a powerful influence in helping to shape the new order of things growing out of the needs of governmental reforms, even the ordinary observer of events would affirm. The salient characteristics of what may be termed the moral qualities of France are her best guarantees of stability and safety. They constitute the fundamentals of all progressive national development.

Unfortunately, there are concomitant qualities not so praiseworthy,—more intensive, perhaps, as one proceeds to the higher official circles,—which I may term the temperamental qualities, as distinguished from the moral, to which I have been referring. What part personal jealousies have played in some of the most important events of history no one can tell, but I have seen that trait do more to bring about the downfall of French Ministries than all other causes combined. It was also the mainspring in the movement to discredit others in high places.

Gabriel Hanotaux, former Minister for Foreign Affairs and noted historian, in explaining to me the fall of one of those Ministries, said: "Oh yes, the plotters stand in the corridors of the Chamber, making their plans for the fall of Ministries even as they pass by."

But as a common military danger at its most imminent crisis late in March 1918 compelled a unity of command of the Allied forces, so a common danger in the civil affairs of France, coupled with an undeniable patriotism and devotion to principle, rendered impotent the plots and intrigues of politicians. Then, too, despite the criminations and recrimina-

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tions of partisan groups, the fact still remains that neither the patriotism nor the loyalty, nor the integrity of such men as Viviani, Delcassé, Briand, Ribot, or Painlevé of the past Ministries had been questioned, any more than those of Clemenceau and Pichon in the Ministry which followed. I have heard them all, both in public and private, proclaim the highest ideals and greatest devotion to country. Providentially, able and patriotic men governed the destinies of France from the very beginning of the war.

However, in forecasting what might happen, no one familiar with the past history of France could blindly ignore the influence which might suddenly be exerted upon the masses by some unexpected and untoward incident, when the restraining power of the common danger to their country should be no longer felt.

Perhaps no one has understood his own people better than the writer Gustave Le Bon who, thirty years ago, wrote his clever book *The Crowd—A Study of the Popular Mind.* One knowing the French people and reading his analysis, so epigrammatic in its style, of the psychology of the acts of crowds, can hardly escape the belief that he was drawing a faithful picture of the French mind. Asserting that "the crowd demands a god before everything else," the author says that sentiment has never been vanquished in its eternal conflict with reason.

France is still sentimental. Though common sense and patriotism might prevent "the crowd" from becoming a devotee of "a god before everything else" during the war, yet the power of its influence, in my judgment, particularly with the encouragement which military successes bring, would have to be reckoned with during the days succeeding the final Allied victory.

In a conversation with Madame Poincaré at the Embassy residence in 1916, she spoke with much intensity of the humiliation which Germany had inflicted upon France in the 1870 war. One familiar with the French mind could not help but believe that it was somewhat in such a spirit that the demand for the restoration of Alsace and Lorraine was made,

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quite as much as a measure of sheer reparation. And it was quite natural that it should be so.

I took occasion, during one of my calls on M. Pichon, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in June or July, 1918, to refer to a speech made by the headmaster of a French college, on a public occasion prior to the memorable series of victories for the Allied arms, boldly proclaiming that as a result of this great war the eastern front of France should hereafter be the Rhine, a limit traced by nature and by history. Such utterances had been challenged by at least the Socialist element in *L'Humanité*. I asked M. Pichon what support he thought the French people would give them.

He said that the views expressed did not represent those of the French Government, which was strongly opposed to the doctrine of territorial extension as the price of the war.[1] His words made a deep impression on me. Referring to the doctrines enunciated by President Wilson in his message of January 8, 1918, he said that he could assure me that the French Government was in entire accord with them.

"France," he said, "has such confidence in the wisdom and the motives of President Wilson, that I can say to you that she will absolutely agree to follow the course he advocates. She will conform to the principles which he has declared to be so vital in this war."

I believe that M. Pichon in that declaration correctly reflected the overwhelming sentiment of the French people. I know, from frequent talks with men like Ribot and Briand, when they were Prime Ministers, that the views of President Wilson were looked upon by them as voicing the views of France. Indeed, it was Madame Ribot who once told me that her husband had directed his son to paste in his ready reference-book the message of the President on April 2, that it might serve him for guidance in his own acts as Premier.

Only upon one point did I find that a few in the Government itself—and I believed I might include Premier Clemenceau—raised a question: as to agreeing to the establishment

[1] M. Clemenceau confirms this assertion by his own words in *Splendeurs et Misères d'une victoire*, Ch. XII.

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of a League of Nations.[1] I had good reason to know Clemenceau was sceptical as to the practicability of forming such a League which would be able to meet satisfactorily the purposes of its creation, though in principle he thought such a solution for settling future international difficulties was much to be desired.

It was Louis XIV who, at the zenith of his power, said: "I am the State." For a year M. Clemenceau, as Premier of the French Republic, was able to say for all practical purposes: "I am the Government." In my telegrams to the Department at different times, I had frequent occasion to refer to his courage, determination, and popularity with both the soldiers and the civilians.[2]

Seventy-six years old when he again came to power on November 17, 1917, having already been Premier from 1906 to 1909, Georges Clemenceau, prominent in the days attending the birth of the Third Republic nearly fifty years before, remained seemingly as vigorous, physically and mentally, as a man in middle life. Forceful in his speech, inspiring confidence in his ability to do all that he undertook to do, there has been no man in France so idealized since the days of Boulanger as Clemenceau came to be at this period. A powerful orator endowed with a trenchant wit and fearless in attack, M. Clemenceau had been feared as much as admired in Parliament, where he had repeatedly overthrown a Cabinet by his sudden and irresistible interventions. He was the sole survivor of those who at the National Assembly, following the defeat of France in 1870, had protested against the cession of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany. His caustic editorial pen—possessing all the qualities of his oratory—had since shown that as far as Germany was concerned he had never disarmed.

Whether he at all times exercised his influence without prejudice and solely from the dictates of principle, or whether he used that influence not unmindful of an ulterior purpose to

[1] See also Chapter XVII.

[2] Cf. the views on M. Clemenceau by René Benjamin, *M. Clemenceau dans la retraite*; Jean Martet, *Le Silence de M. Clemenceau, M. Clemenceau peint par lui-même, Le Tigre*; Georges Suarez, *La Vie orgueilleuse de Clemenceau.*

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discredit his foes in former Ministries, is a question which would be variously answered. Certainly his enemies would not answer it in the same manner as his admirers.

While it may be said that undoubtedly he is a man of intense prejudices, yet there is no doubt in my mind but that he patriotically used every particle of energy in his being for the protection of the interests of his country. No other man in France could have inspired such confidence in that belief, nor have been so successful in the accomplishment of such a task. More cynical and sceptical, however, of high ideals as applied to European politics, and more uncompromising in his attitude, he lacked the idealism of a Ribot and the conciliatory spirit which would characterize a Briand. But withal he was needed as the man of the hour to meet the crises imposed by military defeats, intriguing and corrupt propagandas, and serious labour troubles. He had also the confidence of the Army, which is ever distrustful of the encroachments of civil authority.

Although not attempting here to describe all the prominent figures in the moving forces of French politics, many of them being mentioned in some detail in other portions of this book, there is one distinguished personage to whom I must make a reference—President Poincaré.

In my own opinion and conception of the part he has filled in the affairs of the French nation, when the history of this war is written and the achievements of the actors therein get their just dues, President Poincaré will be looked upon as a wise, patriotic, and safe executive at a time when such a man was needed. Altogether lacking the aggressiveness, dash, and personal magnetism of a Clemenceau, the amiability of a Briand, or the brilliancy of a Viviani, he may not have filled the public mind with that conception of the heroic ideal which it craved. But if this was true, he on the other hand was free from the dangers of that kind of pyrotechnic statesmanship which, while lacking nothing of the spectacular, possessed nothing of the poise and good judgment needed in meeting the many trying situations which the problems of the war imposed. But I have never seen anything in his acts or his public utterances

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that was not characterized by sincerity, fairness, and, withal, a dignity compatible with his position; a position, by the way, in itself limited through the prescriptions with which the laws and the constitution of France have hedged in its powers, and the extreme use which Parliament makes of its authority.

My old and good friend M. Ribot had experienced difficulties with the Socialists ever since the Spring of 1917, over the proposed calling of a Socialist Congress at Stockholm, where Allied and neutral Socialists were to meet to discuss the war aims of both groups of belligerents.

The promptness with which this proposal had been accepted in Germany caused the Allied and Associated Powers to examine it with circumspection, only Russia being disposed to acquiesce. France and England both eventually judged it necessary to refuse passports to those desiring to go to Stockholm for the purpose.

On April 26, 1917, the French Socialist Party met and decided not to appoint delegates, but in May the Socialist Minority element held a separate meeting at which the invitation to Stockholm was accepted, this action being approved by the majority of the important Socialist Federation of the Seine Department. In June and again in August there were agitated sessions at the Chamber, Premier Ribot securing each time a majority to support his refusal of passports, and justifying himself against charges of "imperialism."

Nevertheless, the Socialist Group remained on the alert for any occasion to provoke his downfall.

This was found in connection with the "defeatist" wave then noted in some quarters, and the accusations being brought openly in the Press against men in high places such as the Minister of the Interior, M. Malvy, and former Premier Caillaux, as well as against obscure individuals such as Bolo Pasha, Almereyda, Duval, Landau, Goldsky, and others, whose names then for the first time became known to the general public. Finding himself unable to govern against the systematic Socialist opposition, M. Ribot resigned as President of the Council on September 7, but consented to remain as Minister for Foreign Affairs in the new Cabinet formed by

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M. Paul Painlevé. Eventually, however, M. Ribot withdrew completely, being replaced at the Foreign Office by M. Louis Barthou.[1]

The Painlevé Ministry, in turn, tendered its resignation on November 16, finding itself opposed by a majority of ninety-one votes in the Chamber of Deputies. Such a result had been freely predicted since the beginning of the month, its consummation being delayed only by the adjournment of Parliament until M. Painlevé returned from the War Conference held at Rome. The opposition to the Ministry, which had started with practically the entire Socialist group of Deputies, had gained strength from various other elements, which for one reason or another had become dissatisfied. Undoubtedly, the failure of the Cabinet to take a clear stand in the matter of the above-mentioned scandals, and particularly the case of the notorious Bolo Pasha, accounts of which filled many columns in the Paris Press, made the Cabinet very unpopular, this sentiment increasing after the resignation of M. Ribot.

It was over a request he made for an adjournment of interpellations on this subject that M. Painlevé was overthrown. Among the names prominently mentioned for the position of Premier were Viviani, Clemenceau, Léon Bourgeois, and Louis Barthou. It was to M. Georges Clemenceau that the confidence of Parliament went, with the full support of the French public as a whole, only the Socialist group at the Chamber opposing him but finding in him an adversary who asked no better than to fight them at every turn.

The keynote of his policy as Prime Minister and Minister of War was struck in his initial address to the Chamber immediately upon the formation of his Cabinet.

"I shall make you no promises," he said. "I shall wage war. That is all."

[1] As President of the Council in 1913, he had put through the 3-year Army Law (see Raymond Poincaré, *L'Europe sous les armes*, pp. 147–157). His only son Max, a volunteer who had asked to be sent at once to the Alsatian Front, was killed by a shell in the streets of Thann, December 14, 1914. (See Poincaré, *L'Invasion*, pp. 508–9). Minister for Foreign Affairs 1917, Minister of Justice 1926–1929.

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For eleven months and three weeks he continued unremittingly to wage war—his words bringing inspiration to both soldiers and civilians, like the already famous Verdun watchword: "They shall not pass."

The qualities and the methods of M. Clemenceau's statesmanship were not long in appearing. It had been alleged by some that he "would not dare" to allow prosecutions in high places, even where the charge was intelligence with the enemy. He lost no time in showing that he asked first of all for clear light to be cast upon all doubtful questions, and that he would not allow considerations of either personal friendship or political influence to have the slightest weight where the vital interests of France were involved. He had said that his policy both at home and abroad would consist exclusively in "waging war." No word spoken by any statesman was ever more faithfully kept.

In a personal letter addressed early in the year to Secretary Lansing, I reviewed the general situation, in part as follows:

Ambassador Sharp to Secretary Lansing.

Paris, *February* 20, 1918.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY,

. . . . . .

As stated in my last weekly telegraphic report of the 18th instant, certain complications other than what may be termed strictly political have come to exert no little influence upon public opinion. Their effect strengthens and at the same time weakens the present Government.

Undoubtedly the prosecution and conviction of Bolo Pasha, whose name for the past six months has stood as a synonym for corrupt intrigues and treason, have greatly popularized Clemenceau, and, for a time, the arrest of M. Caillaux—involving charges devoid of financial corruption—added to his strength. But, apparently, reconstructing their lines of offensive, the friends of the latter, comprising substantially the whole of the Socialist Party, as well as certain other strong influences whose identity seems to remain in the background,

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are said to be at the present moment very active in their efforts to overthrow the Clemenceau Ministry.

Concerning the carrying out of such plans, as I intimated in my above-mentioned telegram, one hears now very frequently of threatened labor troubles involving strikes in munition plants, predicted to begin in the near future. A very prominent member of the Chamber of Deputies, at the head of a great Paris newspaper, told me yesterday that such strikes were scheduled to take place on next Wednesday, the 27th instant. You have doubtless been an interested reader of the proceedings of the Interallied Labor Conferences now being held in London.

The Deputy above-quoted informed me that everybody was afraid of Clemenceau, and that his opponents in the Chamber, figuratively speaking, mentioned his name only in whispers. It would seem that the sobriquet given to him of "The Tiger" is not so inappropriate.

A humorous story was told by the same gentleman that even President Poincaré waved aside two envoys—Frenchmen—who came recently up from the Queen-Mother of Spain—herself Austrian by descent but bitterly anti-German—to talk of a peace proposition. The President, with no little haste and embarrassment, referred these messengers to the Government. Later Clemenceau, hearing of the incident, had the men arrested and put under watch near the front.

* * * * * *

I am, my dear Mr. Lansing,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

I sent on April 1, 1918, a long résumé telegram to the President upon the general phases of the war, which I concluded by saying:

"It would seem that the prompt action in bringing to the front additional English troops in considerable number and reinforcement, at the weakest points of the line, by the stationed fighting troops of France, has come into play more quickly and more effectually than the enemy had counted

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upon. There is no question that the very much superior aerial activity of the British and the French airmen, through the dropping of many tons of bombs, and the daring use of machine-guns at low altitudes on the advancing columns of the enemy, proved the most disconcerting and deadly forces used against them. Two whole advancing German divisions were stopped and literally put to flight by such an attack by French air machines. If this new arm of warfare could be sufficiently developed in quick enough time by the Allies, it might well become the determining factor in winning the war. It has been the only means by which a real sense of fear has been carried far over the lines to the German people."

I then mentioned the fact that Clemenceau was spending much time among the French troops to give them encouragement by his presence, and that he had greatly sustained the morale of the people.

Letter from Ambassador Sharp to Secretary Lansing.

Paris, *April* 11, 1918.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY:

. . . . . .

While the unexpected happenings which have characterized the conduct of the war since its beginning have prevented anything like forecasts based on reason being made, yet it would seem beyond all question that the great conflict now raging in the North, involving practically the entire British Front and the northern extremity of that of the French, portends a decision exceeding, in the importance of its results, anything since the repulse of the enemy at the Marne. It is my judgment that Germany has determined to stake the issues of the entire war upon the success or failure of this offensive. How long it will last will depend wholly upon the ability of the Allies on the one side to defend themselves and, on the other, of the enemy, in the face of his terrible losses, to continue. Only the certainty of the marked predominance in the number of the enemy's troops makes the situation very grave for the Allies. Man for man, the French would prove, as they

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have in the past, the masters of the Germans, while the English, just as brave but without the strategy of the French, would be able to hold their own. But the internal conditions of Germany involving the long period of hunger and deprivation of the people, on the one hand, and the boastful confidence of the military power, on the other, have forced Germany to stake all on this offensive. A failure would have a most demoralizing and disastrous effect on the Germans and would probably be the prelude to overtures for peace which would save that country from a collapse.

Out of the struggle that is going on these days, veritably marking the deathlike grip of the opposing forces, I wish I might confidently predict a victory for the Allied Armies, but until the American troops can bring effectively to bear at the front a strength of not less than a half million fighting men, the most optimistic could hardly hope for more than being able to check any further considerable advance of the enemy.

From my own observations growing out of the conduct of this war, characterized by methods so unique, I would rather have 50,000 experienced pilots with 50,000 bombing air-machines with which to attack the enemy than ten times that number of men placed in the trenches. Not even the shells from our biggest guns have been so disconcerting to the advancing forces of the enemy as the attacks in the air.

M. Cambon this morning went so far as to tell me that he feared the employment by the enemy on the Western Front of Russian troops from Ukraine and other sections of Russia. Frequently one hears rumors of at least a quarter of a million Austrian troops being held back of the enemy lines. A hopeful feature may be found in the claim that the French have a splendid reserve upon which they can rely in extreme emergency, and, after all, I feel that it is to their strategy and their operations characterized by so much system that we must look for stemming the tide of German advance. Only the other day a Frenchman, prominent in civil life but holding a kind of liaison position with the Government, told me that there was the greatest concern manifested lest the Germans would succeed in advancing far enough to take possession of the

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coalfields about Béthune, from which they are only now distant seven or eight miles—so near, in fact, that the mines are operated exclusively at night so as not to betray their position to the guns of the enemy. Early in the war the extensive coal mines at Lens were captured by the Germans, and if those of the Béthune district fell into their hands, there would remain only a potential annual output of 10,000,000 tons located in Central France, as against a normal pre-war output of 40,000,000 tons.

In writing you of these conditions, I am aware that long before this letter reaches you a very acute crisis may be reached which would even accentuate the importance of some of the things that I have mentioned; or, on the other hand—though it does not seem likely—a lull may follow the intensive offensive and there may be a process of re-alignment of the forces for some time to come. I would rather look for the former situation to arise.

In any event, I am pleased to assure you that the morale of the Government, as well as of the Army and people, is in every way admirable. It is indeed not too much to say that after nearly four years since the verdict of the Marne, their courage and determination are as indomitable as they were then. I am sure that when the history of this great war shall have been faithfully written, its outstanding feature will be the magnificent record which France has made in her heroic devotion to the call of national duty and individual sacrifice.

I was recently asked, in a telegram from the Department, to send over the bad as well as the good news. Perhaps I can epitomize in just one sentence all that might be characterized as bad news—that is, the strength of the enemy.

In conclusion, I feel that I should say to you that in all my telegrams—for this is a day calling for telegraphic information rather than the slower process of writing despatches—I have sought to avoid freighting them down with an account of mere rumors of this thing or that. Most of these have no foundation in fact, and only give way to a new crop of other rumors the following day almost diametrically opposed to them. Such are the rumors: secret plottings for revolts against the

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Government, hostility towards the British or American forces and widespread distrust of their motives, and, I might add, with a good deal of truth, the exaggerated importance of the necessity for American propaganda in France showing our achievements, integrity of our motives, etc. The widely known presence of our own troops in considerable numbers at the front, coupled with the widely read utterances of President Wilson, have furnished the best evidence of our earnestness. I am sure that no American in France has any reason to doubt the full confidence and even affection which the French people have for our country.

I am, believe me, my dear Mr. Secretary,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

In appreciation of the gravity of the period, the General Confederation of Labour unanimously resolved, on April 18th, to call on all its members to refrain from the slightest attempt to declare on the First of May the general strike which had been expected as a labour demonstration. Nevertheless partial strikes continued, causing some concern as they affected industries of vital importance. This situation was settled by a compromise in which M. Clemenceau imposed his will, when a delegation of strikers called upon him on May 18.

The Press published only few details, but according to the information received by the Embassy, the demands made by the delegation were as follows: (1) the recall of the order sending mobilized workmen to the front; (2) an increase in the scale of wages; (3) clear explanations as to the reasons for which France was still fighting and what hopes there might be for an early peace.

M. Clemenceau replied: (1) The order sending mobilized workmen to the front could not very well be recalled, since such an action would have an unpatriotic appearance, especially at the present moment: but the order could be applied so as to take into account such cases as really deserved to be considered as exceptional; (2) the question of higher wages would be examined and satisfaction given; (3) France had never yet

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received official peace overtures offering any guarantee whatsoever; but no genuine opening for peace would be neglected when it should come; meanwhile, the country had no choice but to fight on.

These replies were taken by the delegation as giving sufficient satisfaction for the time being. Several divisions of cavalry had been under orders to go to various industrial centres in case these negotiations failed, so threatening had some aspects of the situation become.

The reference made to conversations bearing upon peace, a question brought up by the strikers' delegates and to which M. Clemenceau had replied to their satisfaction, corresponded with a preoccupation becoming general at that time, although no responsible person felt any doubt about the necessity of continuing the war until satisfactory terms should be assured. Prior to the great German offensive, the matter had been brought to public attention by Lord Lansdowne's second letter, extracts from which appeared in the Paris Press of March 6 and 7, the comment upon it being adverse.

Strangely enough, only a few days before I had presented my views of this problem in a letter to President Wilson:

Letter from Ambassador Sharp to President Wilson.

Paris, *March* 4, 1918.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

At a time when, as it appears to me, a situation more tense —more portentous of far-reaching results not only upon the future state of the war but also upon the peace to follow—than at any period since the beginning of the war confronts all the belligerent peoples, I have felt that I ought to bare my own thoughts before you as I view the situation. To be perfectly candid, I have hesitated not a little in coming to this conclusion, because I am not sure that they are in harmony with your own, neither am I certain that they will be very helpful. Besides, the changes of to-morrow may greatly alter the views of to-day.

But I am reassured in writing you as I do, because of the

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attitude of fairness with which my opinion will be considered, and the justice that will be accorded in conceding to me the best of purpose. Indeed, I believe it to be my highest duty as a witness of its unspoken need, after these long three years and a-half of the world's travail.

To my mind, in the progress of this war, the point of the parting of the ways is not far off. One of those ways leads to the conclusion of the war by diplomatic ends, the other by the test, imposed in feudal times, of trial by battle. I believe the desired goal can be not only much more expeditiously attained but with more lasting and beneficial results by the former route. I make no reference to the terrible toll exacted in travelling the other road, only because that should hardly be considered in the safeguarding of human liberty.

Lest the views that follow be misconstrued, I wish at the outset to affirm that with mind and heart I have approved every step that has been taken by our Government in this war. I do not see how those steps could have been avoided, neither can I see how they could have been more wisely directed, and I have great confidence in the wisdom of our future policy. More than this, it was but the one honorable and consistent course for us to follow—and it must be pursued until the very end with the greatest possible vigor. We must be fully prepared to win by that old feudal test, so unhappily brought down to the civilization of the Twentieth Century, if the road to the victory of right by diplomacy cannot be travelled.

It is because I believe that the events of the past few weeks—discouraging though they may appear from a purely military standpoint—by again setting in motion the forces of reason, have made rifts in the clouds of men's hate and mad ambitions, that I feel that the road at the fork in the highway which leads to peace through diplomacy is the right one to take. Through those rifts, widened by your inspired message, has been shed on the bloodstained fields of war-wrecked Europe the light of a new hope. Contrary to the professed belief of almost a universal Press, I believe that hope, gaining substance and nourished by your words, has found a lodgment in the hearts

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of millions of suffering humanity. May God speed the day of the acceptance of these words!

But, as the old saw has it that "it takes two to make a bargain," so it takes the common will of two contending forces to settle their differences. Is this possible? At the expense of being regarded as a visionary, an optimist, but most assuredly not a "*défaitiste*," I believe it is possible. It is true that Hertling's words lack much in candor, and, unfortunately, exhibit a bravado which has made the name of the German Government so justly abhorrent in this great struggle, but there is in them not only much less of arrogant abuse of the Allied Powers than formerly, but, most encouraging of all, an apparently frank avowal of a desire for peace, even going so far as to express substantial acquiescence in the four principles enunciated in your last message to Congress.[1] There is every reason to believe that a powerful peace element in Germany forced him to go that far, despite the strength of the spirit of the militarists led by Hindenburg. It needs but encouragement from the Allies for it to grow much stronger. I hope the awaited reply of Count Czernin may go farther.

But can they be trusted? Some day inevitably they must be, if peace is again to come to earth.

But, again, is the peace talk of the enemy a mere camouflage hiding more wicked and artful designs of the German Government? If one reads the English Press, decidedly yes. Practically all the French papers, except those edited by the Socialists, take nearly the same view. Unfortunately, some of our great New York dailies give voice to much the same sentiments.

But thanks to your patience and forbearance, coupled with a rare wisdom in setting forth our contentions, and all inspired by a purpose which only the blind must fail to see or trust, substantial advancement has been made in getting together. My prayer has been that before a resumption of general hostilities,

[1] The German Imperial Chancellor, Count von Hertling, and the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Czernin, had previously and on the same day, January 24, 1918, made speeches referring to possible peace conditions.

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bound to be more frightful even than those of the past, all such efforts to establish a just, honorable, and defendable peace might come to a fruitful conclusion.

The difficulty of bringing about such a result will be very greatly increased after these hostilities have again begun. The intense slaughter will be revived, and, undoubtedly, new conditions will rise out of the possible occupation of other territory and the also possible added complications of other Powers being drawn into the conflict.

The superiority in the number of the Allied adherents over that of the enemy has been alike a source of weakness as well as strength. Briefly writing Colonel House the other day, transmitting a letter from Professor Herron, I made the comparison of the position of the Allies with that of the juggler who is compelled to keep a dozen balls constantly up in the air, lest one falling should explode and put him out of business. While the task of the enemy is similar, yet he has fewer balls to watch.

May I now consider another phase of the question, as it concerns the part which our Government is bound to play in determining peace conditions, and that, whether through the issue of the force of arms or of diplomacy. In endeavoring to analyse the problems which the events of this war, particularly those of the last few months, have signalled, I have been led to some conclusions, amounting to convictions, as they affect our own position with reference to the Allies as well as to the enemy. The accumulating force of certain manifest signs will not permit me to divest my mind of these convictions.

If I read those signs aright, the influence of our Government will be much stronger in bringing about the realization of the high ideals which you have so forcefully advocated by negotiating a peace through diplomatic channels than by the decisive results of victories on the battlefield. With the influence of centuries shaping the aspirations of the different European Powers, and the fixedness of their conceptions of moral obligations, embittered by many reprisals in the past, they will submit to our wishes only as the necessity therefor exists.

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As a concrete evidence of the truth of this statement, in so far as it indicates the divergence of views between America and Europe, M. Cambon, within the past weeks, said to me that notwithstanding that he was a warm friend and admirer of the United States, he considered that our Government did not understand European politics, which were decidedly different from the American. He thought our purposes too idealistic to be practically applied to European conditions. Only the fact that he has always been very frank with me in our exchange of views was responsible for his making this broad statement.

However, in spite of the divergence of views on the ultimate aims of the war, our influence to-day is most potent in bringing a just peace to Europe. It is for the reason that the cause of the Allies is irretrievably lost without us. Under such conditions the counsel of the President of the United States is not only given the greatest consideration, but every day the sentiment over here becomes more favorable to accept his leadership.

But in that very acceptance of leadership a danger may lurk—indeed, I have already noticed a trace of this effect upon the political leaders of the Allied Powers, particularly of France. I believe the same is true of England. The Socialists have espoused the principles enunciated by our Government almost as the articles of a religious faith. It was more than a casual observation made by M. Pichon the other day, though said in good nature, when he told me that the Socialists—in opposition to whom the present French Government is so bitterly arrayed—were using the words of your message against the Government. He added, however, that it was a happy circumstance that everybody in France seemed to endorse the message. With personal ambitions and jealousies of prestige among Party leaders, and questions of national import running athwart the high-minded and thoroughly unselfish principles which America advocates and which she insists must be recognized, only the power which she can exert in saving her Allies from defeat will enforce the harmony of action and the adherence to these principles.

The strength of our position is thus not alone in the con-

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fidence which the mass of the people have in the unselfishness and appraisement of our aims, but in the realization particularly of the heads of the Government of the fact that we are needed to win the war.

Granted there is a sincere disposition on the part of the respective Governments of the opposing forces to settle the war through peace negotiations, the one question transcending all others in its importance is the manner to be selected for their consideration. The question is no more important than it is delicate and dangerous. Soon after the declaration of Lord Lansdowne,[1] and while the criticism from certain quarters was as yet unabated, a noted English writer observed that undoubtedly it required great courage to continue the war but it required a still greater and higher courage to stop it. Indeed, he who would essay this latter rôle must possess the confidence of the people not only in his undoubted courage but in his wisdom and integrity of purpose.

In studying the various notes issued just preceding the declaration of war as contained in the books of the different Governments, I came to the conviction that one of the greatest obstacles that stood in the way of preventing such an outcome had been the fact that no two representatives of those Governments, even those of the Allied Powers, were enabled to get actually together in personal contact to discuss the momentous questions which were raised. Telegrams issued from the capitals of each of the countries, crossing each other in their course, seemed rather to aggravate the situation than otherwise.

Most assuredly if peace is finally to come by an exchange of views between the Allied Governments and those of the Central Powers, some day and somewhere those responsible for them must meet. The arrangement of such a programme is extremely delicate. While we may not with prudence propose it ourselves at this time, yet it seems to me that a grave responsibility would follow the refusal to consider such a proposal if made by the other side. After the terrible sacrifices, and in the face of impending ones which may be still greater, I would

[1] The letter published by the London *Daily Telegraph* November 9, 1917. It was to be followed by another letter published March 6, 1918.

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lose faith in humanity did I not believe that a rapprochement could be established.

In expressing this belief, I do not ignore the seemingly impossible contentions, as well as the apparent antagonistic character, of the enemy's aspirations. The arrogant and foolish talk of the Kaiser has been one of the most discouraging things in considering the success of such a course. The forcible taking of Russian provinces, the harsh and exacting terms of peace now being imposed upon distressed Roumania, do not, on their face, augur well for the reaching of a common agreement consistent with your own exalted conditions which must precede—in substance if not in form—the establishment of any peace. Just to what extent the military spirit of Germany is now dominant, I do not know, but that there is a very strong sentiment existing throughout that Empire for an early peace, I have not the slightest doubt. Austria would declare for it to-morrow on generous terms, if she could be assured of future safe relations with her powerful ally. Her segregation through peace negotiations would quickly end the war.

It is my belief that probably but a single condition advanced by the Allies would render it impossible to come to an agreement with Germany. That condition is the contention raised by France for the return of Alsace and Lorraine. Though, God knows, if I could so arrange it and not disturb the future peace of Europe thereby, I would give to France not only Alsace and Lorraine but an indemnity equal to the billion dollars extracted from her by Germany nearly fifty years ago, together with interest from that date to the present, yet I believe that von Kuhlmann's "never,"[1] uttered in answer to such contention, can be revoked only by a decisive victory by arms. However, if von Kuhlmann's "never" is unyielding, the position of France upon that question seems to be equally

[1] Dr. Robert von Kuhlmann, who, as German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, declared Germany would "never" return Alsace and Lorraine, had as Counsellor of Embassy to Prince Lichnowsky in London, 1913–1914, reported like his chief that Great Britain would "never" enter the war against Germany. See *Mémoire du Prince Lichnowsky* and cf. an anecdote related in the Preface to the 1928 American edition of *The Gift of Paul Clermont* by Warrington Dawson.

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so. The demand for the return of these lost provinces has become her slogan in this war—a veritable Shibboleth. But, most assuredly, if their recession is the price of peace, no ransom paid in blood or gold in the history of the world will have been so great. To give them separate autonomy or cede Lorraine alone to France, or in any other manner to arrive at a satisfactory arrangement as it affects the future of these provinces, is one of the most difficult problems to be considered.

But in following the route to peace by diplomacy, I have journeyed far from that other way which, at the fork of the roads, leads to peace through victory by battle. Not being a military man I leave the discussion of that question to those who should know, far better than I, the probability of being able to reach the goal by that method. I remember writing you—I think it was many months before our own entrance into the war—of the three factors, two of them heretofore practically unknown, which would tend indefinitely to prolong the war, namely: the apparently evenly matched strength of the opposing forces, the trench system of fighting, and the use of the aeroplane.[1] These factors are still the dominating ones, and their equilibrium since then has been but little disturbed. True, on the face of things, the first-named seems to be seriously affected by the melting away of Russia, yet this can only prolong the struggle. Discouraging as such a situation may seem for an early conclusion of the war, our own entrance into it has made it impossible, in my judgment, for Germany and her Allies to win. However, if the factors which I have mentioned prevent Germany from winning, they are equally obdurate in auguring a victory for the Allies. It is my judgment, born of long observation, that there are especially two ways in which such a victory can be brought about, if the result is to be decided by force of arms. The first is: we must as soon as possible gain an overwhelming mastery in the air—a bare supremacy will not do—which will enable us literally, as well as figuratively, to carry the war into Germany. In this way, the most stubborn of all barriers—the trench—will

[1] See notably letters dated January 12, 1917, Chapter IX, and August 24, 1917, Chapter X.

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be practically eliminated. The second lies in the possible upheaval of internal conditions in Germany. A pronounced success of the first method would contribute to the other in bringing home to the German people the real severity of war.

In passing, I feel I must pay the tribute which truth demands to the magnificent courage—as great as ever—which the British and French soldiers on this front have shown through such an unparalleled test. Indeed, the faith which France—and I believe England as well—places in the ability of America to save the cause is as inspiring to the pride of every American as it is pathetic to those who know her need and suffering. The splendid appearance and behavior of our soldier boys over here, together with the demonstration of our country's remarkable preparations to back them up, are equally inspiring.

With high personal respect,

I am, believe me, my dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

Little more than a month later came the greatest sensation which had yet been recorded in connection with conversations pointing towards peace. This was the publication by Premier Clemenceau of a letter written by Emperor Charles to his brother-in-law, Prince Sixte de Bourbon, and asking him to deliver a message of a possible conciliation to President Poincaré.

The fact that the letter had been written the year before, and kept secret by the French Government, came to the public as an astounding revelation. While it was true that in the late days of M. Ribot's premiership he had made brief reference, in the course of a statement in Parliament, to certain peace overtures coming from Austria, yet his remarks were but vague. I had at the time been advised from a confidential source that the French Government had been approached. The emissaries, described for purposes of secrecy as "two Belgians of great importance," were none other than Princes

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Sixte and Xavier de Bourbon, brothers of Empress Zita, and officers in the Belgian Army because, as members of a royal family having once reigned in France, they were barred by law from serving under the French flag. They had proposed a peace arranged on the basis of returning Alsace and Lorraine to France. This attempt at negotiations had failed, because of the scepticism felt by the French Government as to the sincerity of these propositions.

The act of Premier Clemenceau, in publishing the text of the letter to Prince Sixte, created all the more surprise since it had been intended as a message for President Poincaré. While the Paris Press stood almost unanimously behind M. Clemenceau in giving publicity to this now famous letter, yet there was a feeling in some quarters that a great mistake had been made. Such an incident at any other time would have been the occasion of violent interpellations at the Chamber of Deputies. As it was, the Socialist Party seized upon the incident to renew their criticisms of what they termed secret diplomacy, while others not politically allied with them deplored the publication. A Committee composed of such men as Baron Denys Cochin, Albert Thomas the Socialist leader, and Marcel Cachin belonging to the most advanced wing of the Socialist Party, held a conference with the Prime Minister on the subject.

As a matter of fact, President Poincaré had very properly shown the letter to M. Ribot, then his Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and it was natural for M. Ribot to take Mr. Lloyd George and M. Sonnino into his confidence. As a man of good faith, he could not have attempted action without consulting his Allies, but it might have been expected that the affair would end there if no action were judged advisable, the letter remaining as a record for future negotiations if occasion arose. It was therefore felt in many quarters that M. Clemenceau, who was not Foreign Minister, by publishing the letter for his personal defence to prove his own case, had wasted a weapon which, if held in reserve and used opportunely, would have had great weight. Instead of this, all hope for a peace through Austria had vanished, the interests

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of Austria and Germany being indeed knitted more closely together than before by this indiscretion.[1]

In the talk that was current about possible efforts to overthrow M. Clemenceau on the strength of all this, it was said that advice had been given to President Poincaré to form a new Cabinet made up of so-called "extra-Parliamentary Members," a thing which, it was claimed, he had a right to do, since custom alone had bound the selection of Cabinets down to Members of Parliament. But it was well known that M. Poincaré, always a lover of established methods, would be very reluctant to follow such advice.

I cabled to the Department in this connection:

Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

Paris, *April* 15, 1918.

On Wednesday M. Clemenceau is scheduled to give an explanation of his action and the causes leading up to it before the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber; there is renewed talk of the likelihood of the overthrow of the Ministry growing out of M. Clemenceau's action, and it would seem quite possible that Deputies heretofore of rather divergent views might desire and even work in common for such results. It is my opinion, however, that especially during the great stress of the momentous events hingeing upon the success of the enemy's attack, the Clemenceau Ministry would not fail to receive a vote of confidence in the Chamber if that issue were to be raised now.

There is no intimation that the soldiery is not back of him and military considerations just at this crisis will dominate every political situation that may arise until it is over. It is under such conditions that the courage and bold aggressiveness of Clemenceau will most likely guarantee his retention of power.

While one hears something of renewed labor agitation in

[1] The French point of view concerning these and other peace overtures was fully discussed in two series of anonymous articles published by *La Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1929 and 1930, entitled *La Paix des Empires centraux* and *Les Etapes de l'idée de paix pendant la guerre.*

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connection with increasing secret activities of the Socialist opposition to the Government as being more than a mere rumor, and I have heard that factory labor has been strongly organized throughout France to act in concert with the Socialist elements, yet I believe that only a series of decisive military defeats greatly endangering the Allied forces could enable such a combination to exert any considerable influence or come into being as a factor of power. I do not believe the enemy can administer such defeats.

SHARP.

The arrival, in May, of the American Labour Commission with Samuel Gompers created a most lively interest, the Press giving much space to accounts of its doings. In a cable to the Department dated May 12, I said:

"There is no question but that the impression created by the coming of these men, and particularly by the words uttered by their leaders, has been most favorable. Attending a number of receptions accorded to the members of the Commission, I am able to give full praise to the wisdom and patriotism of the messages they brought. Many members of the French Government, among them M. Clemenceau and M. Pichon, have expressed to me their greatest satisfaction over the helpful influence which these talks have exercised among the Labor elements in France."

In this same telegram I referred to the visit to the Embassy Offices of General Niessel, head of the French Military Mission to Russia. On the occasion of another visit he paid to me, he informed me that he had the authority of M. Clemenceau himself to state that he reflected the attitude of the French Government.

For nearly an hour he gave me a most interesting account of the conditions existing in Russia, which country he had left about the middle of March after spending seven months there. He had had an opportunity to study Trotzky, whom he described as a man of ability and cunning, but so lacking in political sense and judgment as to render impossible anything like the constructive work such as all Russia now needed

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most, while the more conservative people opposed to his domination yet lacked the power to bring about his fall. Chaos reigned everywhere, with nothing like a national unity of spirit around which to rally the great movement for constructive reform in government. In many places the working man, while being regularly paid, refused to perform any work. The small farms would not sell their produce, and the lands of the former large proprietors were not being cultivated, because there was no money to meet the expenses. Such conditions necessarily increased the prospects of famine.

General Niessel pointed out that there was a possibility of the Russian people in desperation finally turning to Germany to bring order out of chaos, and with it safety from anarchy. He said that already many who opposed the authority of the Bolsheviks would welcome German intervention as preferable to experiences under the despotic power of the former. This led him to state that Japanese intervention was necessary if Russia was finally to be saved from German control. He said many in the Chamber of Deputies who heretofore opposed such intervention would now look with favour upon it.

Some two weeks later, this subject was brought up by M. Clemenceau himself in conversation with me, calling my attention to an exhaustive report just made by M. Albert Lévy as a result of numerous conversations with prominent Russian people, mostly in Government circles, arriving from Russia while he was recently stationed in Scandinavia. All this tended to show the strengthening of the sentiment in favour of Japanese intervention.

In my telegram dated May 27 in which I reported upon this, I added:

"As confirming my statement in last week's report as to the important part played by Allied bombing air machines on various scenes back of the enemy lines, M. Loucheur, Minister of Armaments, told me on Saturday that such operations had had a most demoralizing effect on the concentration of the enemy forces and the carrying out of their plans. No opportunity either by day or night, for that matter, has been allowed them to prepare their attack. He stated that according to the

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information at hand, the British and French forces now possessed as many aeroplanes as the Germans."

I reported as follows upon the situation as it stood a week later:

Telegram from Ambassador Sharp to the Secretary of State.

Paris, *June* 3, 5 P.M.

Simultaneously with the great attack extending on a line reaching from Rheims to Soissons, long range guns placed in new positions commenced sending over into the city their great shells of a heavier caliber than heretofore, this time covering a much wider range of territory than the shells previously fired. While these were falling through the day with considerable frequency, every night has witnessed air raids well calculated to arouse terror in the hearts of the people. All of this added to the report of the successes of the first few days of the rapid advance across the Aisne has served to cause a considerable exodus of those who can leave the city. The wider range of fire of the newly placed long range guns brings a much more restricted immunity to any section of the city from danger.

A striking illustration of the possibility of a slaughter that might well follow from the falling of one of these shells was reported on Memorial Day. But a few hours after the Knights of Columbus had held their solemn services in the great church of the Madeleine, a shell struck the end of the structure at a point not more than one hundred feet from where I had sat in attendance with members of the Embassy staff. A position much nearer to where the shell struck was that which had been occupied by Cardinal Amette and others of the most distinguished Catholic clergy in Paris. Had the shell fallen directly on the roof during those services, a repetition of the Good Friday horror at the church of Saint Gervais would have inevitably followed. Up to the hour of dictating this telegram late in the afternoon, for the first time during the past week there have been no shells fired from the long range guns. It is possible that the efforts which M. Pichon told me, at the

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Foreign Office yesterday afternoon, were to be made to destroy these guns, the location of which had been definitely ascertained, may have succeeded, as is now known it was done in the case of the first guns. There is not the slightest evidence of a panic to be observed among the people.

Unfortunately, however, the situation at the front brought so near to Paris within the past week possesses a much greater cause for alarm. Anything like a detailed account of the great battle is lacking in the official communiqués but it would seem that within the past twenty-four hours by a hurried reinforcement of very much needed reserves the French troops have for a time at least checked the advance of the enemy. M. Pichon told me yesterday that both Generals Foch and Pétain had expressed confidence in their Allies to stop the advance permanently, and the general hope is expressed that a counter move may soon be made to regain some of the lost ground. It is expected that the superiority of our bombing aeroplanes will become the same important factor as it was in repelling the March attack. The Foreign Minister also told me that the appearance of a considerable number of American troops in the midst of the battle on the Somme had produced a most cheering effect. The growing favor in which our boys are regarded for their dash and bravery has placed the stock of America in the war at a very high level. One hears on all sides the most enthusiastic praise from the French people. At a great manifestation last week in the Sorbonne in honor of the British Navy the presiding officer, M. Paul Deschanel, President of the Chamber of Deputies, paid a glowing tribute in his speech to the bravery of our boys. He had only a day or two before told me in person that officers returning from the front were full of praise over their behavior. The general impression is that the greatest danger in the present attack grows out of the possibility of the enemy being able at last to eliminate trench warfare and fight above ground. In such a case the advance might be very rapid as the trench warfare for nearly four years in the past has made it quite impossible for either side to make any material progress. The outcome may revolve around the question of the relative strength of the

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reserves which each side may be able to call into action. Man for man the Allies would be, as they have been uniformly in the past, the masters of the Germans. The surprising secrecy with which the enemy has made and carried out his operations coupled with their dash have been the most disconcerting thing to the Allies. One involuntarily comes to look for new blows to be delivered from the most unexpected quarters. All this added to the unknown extent of his reserves and the superiority of his forces in the present attack contribute to make the situation exceedingly grave. I must still record my own faith in the invincibility of the Allied forces.

SHARP.

Telegraphing to the Department on June 9, I reported that like the first great offensive projected on the Northern Front late in March, so the second offensive launched nearly two weeks before, extending against the French lines from Soissons to Rheims, had been gradually checked, but only after an advance such that in the two offensives something like twenty to twenty-five miles had been gained by the enemy in the greatest bulge, although the average width along the entire line of the offensive would be much less. The prevailing opinion seemed to be that the enemy planned to keep on making attacks with sufficient gains each time to enable him to plant a number of big guns within easy shelling distance of the city.

I concluded this telegram by saying:

Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

June 9, 1918.

Colonel Fabry tells me that it is from the third offensive that the greatest danger might come.

M. Clemenceau told me to-day, having returned late last night from the front, that the attack in the neighborhood of Montdidier had been futile. He told me with much confidence that the Allied troops were fully prepared to meet such attacks. It was here that a great many American troops were stationed. It all makes one proud to be an American.

As the timely arrival of Blucher's Army to join Wellington

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upon the historic battlefield of Waterloo rendered impossible the triumph of Napoleon, so to-day Hindenburg, with his mighty army behind him, is anxiously scanning the western horizon, watching the arrival on the shores of France of the only force which can possibly defeat him. Waterloo—it was a matter of a few hours; to-day the anxiety may possibly continue a few weeks; to strike hard, to throw overwhelming masses across the most vulnerable portions of the lines, and to reach the two great objectives which would render the Allies nearly helpless at his feet, that of Paris and Calais, before the arrival of the American Bluchers, is the dogged and indeed now the frantic purpose of this German General with the united power of the greatest military nation on earth back of him, numbering in troops, I have been told on good authority, at least a half million more than the Allies are able to muster on this Western Front. He has met with a resistance certainly beyond anything he had expected. Each day's delay in the accomplishment of his purpose must exercise a very depressing influence at home.

Personally I have great confidence that the American troops are very soon to play a part of the most heroic proportions in stemming the tide of the enemy's progress.

SHARP.

The Socialists now again seized upon the opportunity to raise trouble in the Chamber of Deputies. M. Clemenceau retorted with vigour that this was no time to criticize the acts of generals to whose valour he paid great compliments. A vote of confidence in the Government was passed by 377 to 110, there being upwards of two score abstentions.

It was in this speech that the Premier, undoubtedly fatigued and over-concerned at the gravity of the situation, made some statements descriptive of conditions at the front which perhaps it might have been better not to have mentioned. His blunt admissions as to the desperate situation confronting the Allied forces and the superior numbers against them seemed to have been wrung from one who had been forced to realize serious perils.

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M. Clemenceau closed his speech replying to the Socialists with words giving unmistakable evidence of the dependence placed in the coming of American troops to win the war.

One thing I noticed particularly as the summer advanced. It could be safely asserted that at no other time, at least since the beginning of the war, had such a factor as the Social Revolutionary been so negligible.[1] Events had rapidly brought about this situation. Indeed, a remarkable transformation had occurred since eighteen months before, when the first agitation for the Stockholm Socialist Conference was taking form, at which time M. Cambon told me that the Socialists were so strong in France as to demand conciliatory treatment. Several causes had contributed to this result.

First and above all, the example of a Socialist régime in Russia, with all its exhibition of weakness, inability to govern, and excesses of the despotic power of a few leaders, did very much to discredit the doctrines of Socialism the world over.

All the friends of the Allies had pictured Russia as the bulwark of the Allies on the East, and as is known there was a moment when the Cossacks, rushing in with invincible attacks, swept everything before them. It was von Hindenburg himself who, in the early days of his prestige, pointed out to his troops the ruin and failure of their cause which would attend the yielding by them of a foot of ground to this advancing horde of Cossacks. The reports of those days show that, even though the forces of Austria were augmented by the addition of many divisions of German troops, the advance seemed to be unchecked until it looked almost as though the heart of Germany would be invaded by that terrible force; and yet, as suddenly as it came into being, it passed out of sight, and the next time Russia appeared prominently on the stage, it was in that strange and fantastic revolution which, deposing a régime of more than two centuries of absolutism, established a democratic form of government, which was almost

[1] The Communist Party as it now exists in France, connected with the Moscow Third International, sprang into existence only after the split between the Moderate and Extreme elements which marked the Tours Socialist Congress at the close of December, 1920.

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immediately to disappear from the face of the earth into a reign of terror and anarchy. And yet men, and the sentiments expressed in the Press of that day amply proved it, affected at least to acclaim with enthusiasm the overthrow of the Russian Empire.

One day while awaiting my turn at the Foreign Office, in talking with one of the most brilliant French journalists a day or two following this strange turn of events, I asked him what he thought would be the outcome of the movement. Reflecting exactly what I had in my own mind at the time, he replied: "Possibly of great benefit if it does not go too far." And yet it was but a few months later when everybody recognized that from that time on the great Eastern Ally had dropped out of the game in its most hopeful phase; while another phase might be its final coalition with Germany, through whose intrigues everything like government and order had been destroyed.

The advocates of Social Revolution in France did not escape the opprobrium consequent upon these events, though by no means could they be classed along with the Social Revolutionaries in Russia, in so far as either character or intelligence was concerned.

The Socialist Revolutionary spirit in France might have thrived with a series of failures at the front. In fact, when Paris was so seriously threatened in the Spring and early Summer of 1918 after the German offensive involving big advances, it was everywhere said—though, of course, under breath—that another reign of Communism might occur in Paris, should the French armies be forced to evacuate the city. Even in such an event, however, I have too much confidence in the staid common sense and patriotism of what I may term the "new French people" to believe that the Government would not have endured. Nearly half a century had elapsed since the days of the Commune of '70 and '71. Since that time many of the developments of French life which I have endeavoured briefly to emphasize had taken form. It would have been inconceivable to me that the French Republic should not emerge from the war stronger than when it had entered it.

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CHAPTER XIII

AMERICAN AID AND FRENCH GRATITUDE

EVERYWHERE the Americans were being regarded as the deliverers of France, and the faith placed in this belief was a touching tribute to their valour.[1]

On June 18—the day before the American forces crossed the Marne, preparing their immortal entrance into Château-Thierry some weeks later—I had telegraphed to the State Department:

"I would say on the whole that the morale of the people is all that could be desired. It is indeed incredible that so little alarm should be excited, with a hostile force of not less than one-half a million men massed in one sector, but forty miles away on a restricted battle-front, seeking to break through all barriers to attain the goal—the abandonment of which would allow him to win the war. This calm is explained by the confidence which these people have come to repose in the strategy of General Foch and the bravery of his soldiers, and the growing element of confidence in the splendidly demonstrated valor of our American fighters, used so effectually within the past fortnight to help block the passes to Paris. I am not stating it too strongly when I say that it has come to be a settled conviction that these are the factors in this war against which the Germans can never prevail."

Various aspects of the situation, as concerned American aid, not only to France but to Italy, were touched upon in my correspondence.

[1] As early as May 11, 1917, President Wilson had resolved to have a million and a half American soldiers on the Western Front in 1918. See *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. III, Ch. II.

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Ambassador Sharp to Assistant Secretary Phillips.

Paris, *June* 12, 1918.

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM PHILLIPS,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY,

. . . . . .

As I write, the outlook is more fraught with uncertainty—and, on that account, with more danger[1]—than at any time since my arrival here at the moment of the nearest approach of the enemy to Paris, nearly four years ago. The point which we would all like to know—and one which the enemy, with his usual secretiveness, has kept well hidden—is how great is his strength in reserve forces. If it is of heavy preponderance in numbers, then manifestly the task before the Allied Armies is to put up a successful defense until their forces are sufficiently augmented by American troops. That would be the best that could be reasonably hoped for under such circumstances.

At this time the situation is so complicated that at best one can only guess at the outcome of the great struggle now going on less than fifty miles to the north-east, but we all have the greatest confidence in the valor of those who are fighting for our cause.

However, there would seem to be one outstanding fact imposed by the present critical situation at the front, involving, as it does, almost uniformly successive gains by the enemy.

[1] "The enemy was halted 30 kilometres from Dunkirk, 60 from Calais, 70 from Boulogne, 60 from Abbeville, 60 from Paris, 25 from Châlons. An advance of 40 kilometres towards Abbeville would radically cut off communications with the north of France, separating the British armies from the French, a military result of importance for the termination of the war. A lesser advance towards Paris, without exercising a decisive influence on the military operations, would make a deep impression on public opinion, would provoke the evacuation of the capital threatened with a violent bombardment, and would doubtless disturb the Governmental action indispensable for the conduct of the war. Paris and Abbeville therefore had to be covered at any price." Louis Madelin, *La Bataille de France*, pp. 122–123.

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That is, that before long the Allies must be prepared to launch some great counter-attack, so persistent and effective as to destroy the morale of the foe. I regard such a move as vitally necessary if Paris is to be saved from ultimate bombardment.

With kindest regards,

I am, my dear Mr. Secretary,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

Ambassador Sharp to Senator Atlee Pomerene.

Paris, *June* 17, 1918.

MY DEAR SENATOR:

It is four years ago to-day, if I remember correctly, since on your recommendation the President paid me the high honor of sending my name in to the Senate for this position. Certainly most surprising as well as most tragic events have occurred since that time. Such events could only have occurred at a period in human history when absolute contempt seems to exist for any regard for reason or precedent. . . .

Perhaps all that can be said, without fear of challenge or contradiction, is that our own President is to-day placed in a position where none of his predecessors have ever been—that of a world figure. Both his own strength and the very nature of these historic events have forced him into this position. Just how great may be our work of shaping the world's policies and the period of reconstruction afterwards, without at the same time entangling our own future status among the nations of the earth, is a problem which will require the greatest amount of decision and discernment to solve. European politics, where geography, with its mere arbitrary lines separating different nationalities, has for centuries compelled political alliances, naturally differ very radically from the questions of policy that confront America. How to inspire with new and more exalted principles of Government, how to help meet and direct, and how to help maintain and enforce them without being drawn into the fatal vortex of alliances which must always pre-suppose counter-alliances, is a task clearly set before us. I have full confidence in the statesmanship of President Wilson

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to guide us through those troubled waters which must intervene ere the world's Utopia can be reached. Despite the discouraging example of man's weakness and wickedness, I am sufficiently optimistic to believe that just beyond this fog we are to be permitted to sail nearer its shores than ever before. . . .

While a legitimate criticism of the conduct of the war should always be tolerated, yet I hope the American people will never be diverted from constantly realizing the 97% or 98% record of achievement under unusual circumstances by the beating of the tom-toms of those who can point only to the 2% or 3% of inefficiency. If those at home could really come to understand with what tremendous measure of appreciation the Allies have welcomed our aid over here, they would all hold their heads a little higher.

With my kindest regards to you both,

I am, believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

Senator Pomerene to Ambassador Sharp.

United States Senate Committee
on Privileges and Elections.
July 16, 1918.

MY DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR,

It was very good of you to write me your letter of the 17th ultimo, the date of the fourth anniversary of your appointment as Ambassador to France. At the time we had the pleasure of taking luncheon with Mrs. Sharp at the White House, I heard the President say that when he received a report from you, he knew that he was getting the viewpoint abroad of a real American. I cannot imagine a finer compliment.

. . . . . .

One sentiment prevails everywhere, and that is that we must win the war, and no one doubts that we shall win.

Very sincerely,

ATLEE POMERENE.

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Ambassador Sharp to Secretary Lansing.

Paris, *June* 27, 1918.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY,

I have thought that a survey of the situation as it exists at this moment might be appreciated by you.

We are now passing through the third stage of the war, well-defined and quite distinctive from the preceding ones.

The first stage, in its shortness of duration as well as in the pyrotechnic display of its force, was as some brilliant meteor flashing across the skies from the border-lands of the Belgian frontier and dying out almost in the very environs of Paris. This stage was ended within six weeks after the declaration of hostilities. Both contending forces, given a momentary respite, then burrowed themselves underground along a line extending from the English Channel to the Swiss frontier. . . .

For nearly four years this second stage—pre-eminently the trench stage—of the war ran its course, with only here and there any material advance. This very method of warfare, characterized by the impregnability of the trenches, and the constant watchfulness of the " men up in the air " to prevent any surprise massing of troops on either side, made such conditions fixed and unchanging.

The third stage—more important than the preceding ones, because I believe it to be destined to be the final stage of the war—was ushered in by the German attack late in March. It is this stage and the aspects surrounding its advent, in so far as the Paris view is concerned, that just now naturally most seriously engage attention.

All recognize that the attacks now being made constitute Germany's supreme effort to win the war; —the " hurry-up " programme of her military chieftains, to strike a mortal blow at the French and English armies before those from America can intervene to save the situation. The universal question as to whether they will be able to carry out such purpose, and, if so, of course to end the war, was asked with the greatest concern at the end of the first ten days of the marked gains made by the enemy along the British Front.

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The final checking of that advance was reassuring only in a limited measure. Everybody naturally expected the second attack, but, unfortunately, not in the place where it was finally launched. Again confidence was shaken in the ability of the Allied forces to withstand these onslaughts, for again, as in the preceding attack, a considerable slice of territory, including what must be conceded as an enormous booty in supplies, munitions, guns, and prisoners of war, fell into the hands of the enemy.

But as the wearing away of the surface of a body that has been constantly more and more compressed becomes more difficult and more retarded in its process, so the mass of the defenders of the important passes leading towards Paris, becoming more compact, was finally able to resist any further advances—nay, more than this, to recover in some places the ground already lost and to inflict upon the enemy what is now admitted by him to have been an enormous punishment in loss of men.

Having "gotten their hand in," so to speak, the troops under General Foch have been able, only recently, to hold the enemy in his third successive attack, even though in superior numbers, at a standstill. It is in the last two attacks—particularly in the second one on the sector between Rheims and Soissons—that the American troops first signalled the mighty power upon which, almost in the twinkling of an eye, the weary and discouraged soldiers of the English and French divisions, fighting so desperately all these trying years, have come now to rely so implicitly for deliverance.

The effect upon the people has been magical. To-day America's stock is quoted in the streets of every hamlet, village, and town of France at a high-water mark. Perhaps, excepting that of courage, if I were to signalize the one predominating characteristic—which, after all, is rather generic in its scope—of our American boys in action, it would be that of resourcefulness. It is indeed that one quality which, in my opinion, has been more disconcerting to the enemy than any other one thing, and if I may be pardoned for my conceit—I would rather call it pride—in their achievements, I would say

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that the German troops are hereafter going to give these boys as wide a berth as possible.

I am only confirmed in the opinion which I expressed in one of my weekly telegraphic reports, that somewhere down the line, before these series of German attacks have ended, the American troops will play a most important part in saving a situation which, without them, would have meant a hopeless defeat. Before this letter reaches you such an opportunity may present itself, though I rather believe that the next attack will be directed against the English forces at a point where not many of our American boys are stationed, and probably with such suddenness as to preclude their effective participation for some days.

While the above résumé has dealt entirely with an account of the military operations, yet, out of certain conditions imposed by them, the status of political affairs now existing in France may be said in a measure to have had its origin.

While having a personal regard for every member of the preceding Ministries, particularly the Premiers and Ministers for Foreign Affairs—for they have all been and are to-day my good friends—yet I believe that Clemenceau, despite some of his alleged shortcomings—for it must be remembered that he is a man approaching seventy-seven years of age and has received as many blows as he has ever given—is the one man in the public life of France best qualified to meet the present critical situation where the issue, many believe, must be decided on the battlefield. Personally, I do not share this last belief. Courage in dealing with one's friends as well as in facing the enemy is demanded; in addition to this, great energy, determination, and singleness of purpose must be qualities possessed by the man who would dominate the situation presented in France to-day. If I know the man—and I have had the occasion to talk with him rather frequently and study his temperamental "make-up"—I believe Clemenceau possesses all these qualities.

However, while they give him strength with the people, the usual concomitants of resentment and bitter feeling have not failed to manifest themselves toward him from former powerful

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leaders in the French Government. Our own well-known saying at home, that "politics makes strange bed-fellows," is well exemplified. . . .

It is not strange that under such circumstances the Socialists, who have had no representatives in the present or in the preceding Ministry, have at different times sought by their interpellations as to the conduct of the war to weaken Clemenceau's Ministry; nor that whispered rumors have gained currency from time to time of some unexpected coalition of forces that would restore M. Briand to power.[1]

I know that I may repeat to you in confidence what came to me recently from a very distinguished Frenchman of high military rank and very popular here. He said that President Poincaré had recently deplored the fact that they no longer had a Government in France. The Premier's enemies quite unite in the charge that he is arbitrary, dictatorial, and at times whimsical. Undoubtedly he has strong likes and dislikes, and such a man almost always incurs bitter enmities as well as draws to him the loyal affection of others. The picture of Clemenceau is to-day the picture of the French Government. His chief element of strength lies in the confidence and trust which the army places in him, and it is upon the army that France looks for her protection.

With the enemy in tremendous force but forty miles away, the masses of the people will not look with favor upon the weakening or discrediting of a leader who, by his conduct, has symbolized the national resistance to such an invader, and the politicians dare not do so.

[1] Aristide Briand, eleven times President of the Council and now Minister for Foreign Affairs, had formed his first Cabinet in July, 1909, and the second November, 1910–February, 1911. See Raymond Poincaré, *Le Lendemain d'Agadir*, p. 18. M. Poincaré, after retiring from power for reasons of health in the summer of 1929, wrote of M. Briand, who succeeded him: "Aristide Briand, who had collaborated with me before the war and during the war, had been for three years one of the colleagues with whom I worked in closest intimacy. His great international position, his experience of men and of things, his incomparable talent, his subtlety and his perspicacity, rendered his participation at The Hague Conference indispensable." *La Nacion* of Buenos Aires, September 13, 1929.

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Paradoxical and strange as it may seem, the counsels of President Wilson, and his constructive measures, exert a vastly greater influence upon shaping the thought of the Socialistic mind in France—sometimes of an iconoclastic tendency—than do those of any other leaders of the Allied Powers. The reason, perhaps, is not far to seek; it has confidence in his motives. In my judgment, that influence has been a valuable asset, and far more powerful in restraining the radical actions of this particular group than is generally understood. They have time and again reiterated their own principles as being in full accord with those enunciated by President Wilson, and I would not be at all surprised that coming events should so shape themselves as to give such an unusual situation great weight in harmonizing the discordant elements which will have to be dealt with in making the terms of peace.

If I have allowed my observations to center around M. Clemenceau, it is not alone because of his official position,—for he is both Premier and Minister of War—but because he typifies the martial spirit of the French people.

I would say something, in my concluding sentences, of the attitude exhibited in this crucial moment by the great mass of the people themselves. If anything like fear or panic finds place in their minds, it would be very difficult to discover it. I sometimes find myself wondering what new phase of danger or depredation could seriously disturb the outward calmness of these people. I must chiefly attribute it to the fact that they have had nearly four years of war and have come to accept as a matter of course any kind of conditions that might be imposed by the war. And yet, naturally enough, everybody is intensely concerned over the events now taking place; very few fail to recognize their gravity. Many have indeed quietly left the city as a precaution against any dangers that may come from the expected bombardment.

Last evening I was returning at an early hour from a dinner at the Hôtel Crillon, and, strolling along with some friends by the Place de la Madeleine and the Boulevard Haussmann, it was remarked amongst the members of the party how almost

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completely deserted were the streets. Not for a distance of eight or ten blocks could be seen a half-dozen vehicles or that many people walking along. The crowds that promenade the Champs-Elysées at the most frequented hours have also been greatly thinned out, and I should say that in all probability one-half of the people of Paris have left the city during the past month.[1]

I dislike to express my views as to what would happen in the possible contingency of Paris being eventually taken by the Germans. I have two good reasons for not doing so; first, because I have never believed that they could take the city, and, second, because if they did it would be a matter for the commanding officers of the Allied Armies to consider. If Paris in the gay times of peace was the center jewel in the crown of France, it is certainly, in time of war, her heart. For that and all other reasons which such a loss would involve, I hope that it may be the decree of Providence that no such question will have to be considered.

Stranger things have happened than that to the American boys from across the seas may yet come the lasting glory of saving not only Paris but with it the Allied cause, for if the enemy cannot take Paris he cannot win the war.

I am,

Believe me, dear Mr. Secretary,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

My correspondence with my very good friend and colleague, Ambassador Page in Rome, had long since acquainted me with the situation as it presented itself in Italy.

[1] "They (i.e., the wealthy Parisians) are seeking safety in flight to the South, to Biarritz and to the provinces. There have been great crowds of them flying to the Gare de Lyon and the Gare d'Orléans, Quai d'Orsay." *The Diary of Lord Bertie*, March 15, 1918. "The railway stations of Paris, viz., those going to safe districts, are, as they were in August and September, 1914, stormed by people fleeing away." *Id.* March 26, 1918. "The railway stations are congested." *Id.* March 29, 1918. "It is reckoned that since the German offensive began 500,000 people have left Paris." *Id.* April 4, 1918.

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Ambassador Thomas Nelson Page to Ambassador Sharp.

Rome, *December* 17, 1917.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,

Mr. Edward Marshall, who has been in Italy for some time, is returning to Paris and will be able to give you an account of the situation here.

I wish that House could have come to Italy before his return home.

The Italians are making a brave fight against tremendous odds; but what they especially need is grain and other food supplies. In the southern parts of the country the food situation, if not promptly ameliorated, may lead to events of a decidedly serious nature. And I sincerely trust that we may be able to send over the necessary supplies.

Premier Orlando has recently said that even if the Germans push their way down to Sicily, Italy will not give in and Sicily will then be Italy. This seems to be the general sentiment throughout the country; but Italy must be fed or she cannot keep on.

The crucial point in the situation here in Italy is not so much on the fighting line, where the Italian armies are really accomplishing extraordinary deeds and showing a resolution worthy of the best days of any army in the history of warfare, but in the scarcity of the necessities of life for large sections of the people. The best propaganda that our country could possibly employ at this time would be the sending of some grain-ships to Naples where the need is very pressing. Mr. Marshall is fully informed as to the conditions thereon.

There was a most enthusiastic demonstration here a week ago to honor America's declaration of war against Austria, and all Rome turned out. A holiday was granted to all Government officials and all shop-keepers were requested to close their stores at half-past four, in order that they might all join in the procession, which was over a mile in length. It was the greatest demonstration I have ever seen since I arrived in Rome, with the sole exception of that which was made the Sunday before Italy declared war on Austria in 1915.

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It was indeed gratifying to see the appreciation shown for America and for Mr. Wilson.

With kindest regards and best wishes for the coming season, I am, my dear Colleague, always,

Sincerely yours,
THOS. NELSON PAGE.

Ambassador Sharp to Ambassador Page.

Paris, *December* 27, 1917.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE:

. . . . . .

I have heard so much that is corroborative of the distress throughout Italy and her critical situation that I have the gravest concern over the outlook. Only to-day a letter from a lady newspaper correspondent makes a piteous appeal for someone to get busy that 200,000 more men with guns may quickly come to the rescue. I am afraid the picture which she draws is not lacking in accuracy in sizing up an impending crisis.

This all sounds very pessimistic but I must yet believe that it means only a delay for an unknown time of victory, rather than a precursor of defeat. Surely since you were last here things have been also happening in France, though, Heaven knows! her soldiers and her civilian populace have been marvellous through all these trying ordeals. Perhaps it all can be explained in just one word—Russia, which I have found myself sometimes likening to a situation where the whole side of your house has suddenly blown out, leaving no protection from that side against the elements. German machinations and intrigues have accomplished more than the guns could do.[1]

I wish that you might have come to Paris for a few days during Colonel House's stay, as I think it would have put you

[1] General Broussiloff, who commanded the famous Russian offensive in 1916 and became Generalissimo of the Russian Armies subsequent to the March, 1917 Revolution, cast a great part of the blame on the effect upon Russian soldiers of the ideas of no indemnities and the right of peoples to dispose of themselves. See *Mémoires du Général Broussiloff*, French translation with a Preface by General Niessel, Chapters XI and XII.

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in a needed touch perhaps with questions of great importance here as well as at home. As it was, I had an opportunity to have several long and uninterrupted talks with him which enlightened me on a number of things.

I am, my dear Colleague,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

Ambassador Page to Ambassador Sharp.

Rome, *October* 22, 1918.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,

I am, as you know, sending to Paris copies of all telegrams relating to the situation here, and I propose writing to Colonel House a letter inviting him to come to Italy before settling down to the work which will await him in France, as I am very desirous to have him come and see for himself, and feel for himself, the situation and the atmosphere here in Italy before getting his personal impressions deepened into conviction from those not familiar with the situation.

I know that an invitation to him to come here has been telegraphed to Washington by the Italian Government, and the same has been sent to Paris to meet him there, and I am sending him and Mrs. House an invitation to come on down to Italy as soon as possible, as this will give him the opportunity to talk with and to measure for himself those who will guide Italian opinion at the end.

I hope very much that you will see your way to lending your influence to induce Colonel House to accept my invitation. He has never visited Italy before during the war, and as most of the other Americans who have come over also failed to come to Italy, there is considerable feeling here of being neglected and I do not wish this to deepen into a feeling of being slighted.

We have been of late tremendously to the fore in the appreciation, and I may say the affection, of the Italians, especially of the plain people, and although the failure to send American troops to Italy has had somewhat the effect of dampening the ardor which existed a few months ago, it still exists, and I do not want it to be extinguished.

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There is beginning to be talk of an offensive here and I rather hope it will take place, because the feeling is growing rapidly that Italy should, on every account, make such an offensive.

In the meantime, don't forget that what I am saying is not only as the Ambassador to Italy, but as the "American" Ambassador to Italy, and that I am speaking for America in the foregoing.

With high regard, I am, always,

Sincerely yours,

THOS. NELSON PAGE.

As conditions bearing on the war developed, I had frequently asked for the benefit of the opinion of Marshal Joffre. He had remained technically a military adviser whom the French Government could consult when it chose, and his office in the magnificent gilded "Salle du Maréchal" at the Ecole Militaire, its great windows overlooking the Champ de Mars, was a meeting place for all the generals who had fought under him from 1914 to 1916, and were eventually to help win the war under Marshal Foch. For it is a fact worthy of note that those who, under the stress of battle, had merited the esteem and confidence of the winner of the first battle of the Marne during the first two years and a half of the war, and many among whom, including Foch, had been temporarily set aside when Joffre's own star came to wane, were the very ones who, recalled sooner or later to command, chronicled their names in history for the 1918 campaign and what has since come to be known familiarly as "the battle of France," beginning with the German drive in March, and culminating in the second battle of the Marne and the collapse of German militarism. To mention only a few names among these illustrious generals, there were Mangin, Maistre, Buat, de Castelnau, Debeney, Degoutte, Gouraud, Fayolle, Franchet d'Esperey, and Foch himself, soon raised to the rank of Marshal. Upon this last occasion, as upon the occasion of the appointment of General Foch as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies, letters were exchanged between him and Marshal Joffre testifying to

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the relations of close comradeship and mutual regard which had never failed to reign between the two illustrious leaders.[1] As copies of these letters were communicated to me at the time, I cannot do better than insert them here.

Marshal Joffre to General Foch.

Paris, *April* 16, 1918.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have learned with satisfaction that you have at last been given the powers of Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies.

Your task is a heavy one. The least of things is that you should not be denied any of the means which will enable you to fulfil it.

Whatever may be the difficulties of this task, I am certain that you will conduct it to a happy termination. What you did on the Yser and in Flanders gives assurance for the success of your present operations.

All my best wishes are with you.

Your all-devoted and affectionate

J. JOFFRE.

General Foch to Marshal Joffre.

April 21st, 1918.

MONSIEUR LE MARÉCHAL,

I thank you cordially for the compliments and the good wishes you express to me concerning the new functions conferred upon me. As you say, the task is a heavy one, and the mission comes late; first of all, a situation which had been seriously impaired had to be retrieved on a large scale. This has been done. We have brought up reserves, and it is to be

[1] Particularly since the death of Marshal Foch in March, 1929, the opinion of Ambassador Sharp about the comradeship and high esteem reigning between the two Marshals has been confirmed by all who have published in book form their records of conversations with Marshal Foch. See notably *Foch* by Louis Madelin; *Mes Entretiens avec Foch* by Charles Le Goffic; *Le Mémorial de Foch* by Raymond Recouly; *En écoutant le Maréchal Foch* by Charles Bugnet. Another Allied Ambassador, a witness in Paris to the events of the World War as reflected there, wrote retrospectively: "The two great military characters in the war have been Joffre and Foch." *The Diary of Lord Bertie*, Appendix, July 1, 1919.

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expected that the barrier will hold. Afterwards, we shall see. You have frequently pointed out to us the way we should follow, I shall merely make use of it, hoping that it may be with equal good fortune.

Pray accept, Monsieur le Maréchal, the assurance of my respectful attachment.

FOCH.

Marshal Joffre to Marshal Foch.

Paris, *August 7th*, 1918.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

With all my heart, I applaud your well-deserved nomination as Marshal of France.

I am happy to have you as a comrade, and beg you to believe in my sentiments of sincere affection.

Your all devoted,

J. JOFFRE.

Marshal Foch to Marshal Joffre.

August 7, 1918.

MONSIEUR LE MARÉCHAL,

I deeply appreciate your amiable congratulations, and I thank you cordially for them. Your lessons remain ever present in my mind, for transforming days of anxiety into days of happiness. I shall continue to do my best to attain this result, leaving aside all other considerations.

Pray receive, Monsieur le Maréchal, the renewed assurance of my respectful attachment.

FOCH.

When requested by me to give opinions as to the form which American aid was taking, Marshal Joffre was entirely outspoken, as fearless in criticism when he judged it necessary as he was generous in his expressions first of confidence in what we could be expected to do, and then in admiration for the feats of bravery of our soldiers. These views were expressed sometimes in personal conversations with me, and sometimes through Mr. Warrington Dawson of my staff, who enjoyed

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the Marshal's confidence. The minutes of all these conversations were of utmost value to me, from the summer of 1917 when our army first became a factor to be reckoned with, until after the war was won and the almost equally formidable problems of peace had to be coped with. For Marshal Joffre had one of the most constructive brains I have ever known, as indeed had been demonstrated by his work as an organizer in the early years of the war.

W. D. Memoranda of Conversations with Marshal Joffre.

Confidential.

August 21, 1917.

The Marshal said to me in substance:

"France cannot give more men than she has given and is giving. Nor can England draw on heavier reserves. Our hopes for reserves of soldiers therefore depend upon America.

"With 300,000, or even 200,000, thoroughly trained and experienced American soldiers to begin active operations in March next year, we could probably deal the decisive blow which would turn the military balance definitely in our favour. But this would not mean merely good soldiers hardened to discipline and to army methods. It would mean soldiers who have been tested and have proved their fitness for standing modern conditions of war. Nor is this merely a question of physical courage. French soldiers are fine soldiers, and so are the English, but they have flinched under fire. This is no reflection on them, it is a question of the conditions of war. Our men and the English got hardened gradually. You wish to get hardened quickly. But you cannot take risks on a large scale.

"I have thrown out that figure of say ten or twelve divisions. Some of them are already training in France, others are on their way over. They will soon be accustomed to trench life and will be acclimatized. Their individual training will then for the greater part be done. But how are you going to accustom them to fighting under the new conditions? By throwing them all at once into the fight? The mere fact of

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being in the trenches for a time, and becoming accustomed to that life, will not prepare men for modern fighting.

"One theory would certainly consist in preparing a big army and then hurling it into the balance. But suppose that army of 200,000 were to flinch? Are those risks which can be accepted? I say most emphatically, NO.

"The wiser and safer method would be to begin as soon as possible putting American troops in contact with the French, in the proportion of one American regiment to a French division, and let them be tried at actual fighting under these conditions.[1] If there is any flinching then, it will not have serious consequences, and these men, becoming seasoned under conditions offering guarantees of safety for themselves, will become magnificent soldiers. Little by little and progressively, all the American army in France would then become veterans, and Spring would find them in perfect fighting trim. Under these conditions, 200,000 men, with reserves behind them, could do magnificent and probably decisive work.

"The American feeling that there is plenty of time, which I sometimes hear maintained, is a very serious matter. So is the feeling in some American circles that the war may be won before American blood is shed."

W. D.

[1]See also the Memoranda dated April 5 and April 29, 1918. It should be observed that Marshal Joffre advocated this only as a temporary measure for the purpose of quick training. He was a resolute partisan of the "autonomous American Army," as subsequent Memoranda of these conversations will show.

Of the principle of "brigading," Colonel House wrote in a report dated December 14, 1917:

"They (i.e., the English and French) are asking us to do what the Canadians and Australians have refused to do. If once we merge with them we will probably never emerge. The companies and battalions placed with them would soon be mere fragments. Then, too, if they are placed in such a position they will not get along well with either the English or French and will never get credit for the sacrifices they make. It can, I think, be taken for granted that this plan would be the most effective immediate help we could give the French and English, but it would be at great cost to us." *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol. III, Chapter X.

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December 5, 1917.

Marshal Joffre said in substance:

"In Italy, the French and English troops entered into line for the first time two days ago, two divisions of each, but they have not yet done any fighting. Recent Italian resistance along the Piave and the Brenta has been entirely the work of their own troops, and is greatly to their credit. Of course, the feeling of the moral support due to the presence of French and English troops in the rear has been a help to them.

"I consider that it would still be possible to find a partial solution for the Russian problem by sending several divisions of Japanese troops by the Trans-Siberian, to form a front north of Roumania. From what I can hear, in that region of Russia there are still elements of troops which could be utilized. To the north, the Russian army has simply melted away. This Japanese intervention could not be on a large scale and it would be difficult to arrange with Russia. But this is the only method I can conceive for preventing Germany from taking over and colonizing the Russian regions lying along the western borders.

"The question of a unified command is now generally accepted in principle, although difficulties are found as to the application. The chief difficulty seems to come from the question of the amount of the authority which can be given to a General of one nation over generals of other nations.

"To a certain extent, the principle of a General Commander-in-Chief was applied when I commanded the French armies. I made a point of communicating my plans to the heads of other Allied armies, suggesting the desired co-operation that was needed at appropriate times and places. The Russians heeded me most readily, with the means at their disposal, the Italians also heeded as a rule, though rather half-heartedly, and often acting behind time—once two weeks late, but they did what they were asked to do. The English, while independent as a nation and having their own ideas which they have applied ably, would profit by these suggestions which were to the advantage of everybody. At that period, the French Army in the Orient was under my orders and I could

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assure co-operation there. When I withdrew from the command in France, the command at Saloniki was made independent of the French command. Sarrail was not under Nivelle's orders and is not under Pétain's. So that at present we have not a unified command, even for the French army. We should have to begin by readjusting this.

"Marshal Haig and General Robertson recently called on me and said they agreed on the question of a unified Commander-in-Chief but intimated difficulties with their Government."

W. D.

March 16, 1918.

Marshal Joffre said to me in substance yesterday:

"Secretary Baker's visit has come just at the right moment, not only for him to observe the work now being done by American soldiers in France, so as to apply the results to troops in America, but also for cementing the ties which already exist between France and America but which in the future should be stronger than ever, in the interests of both countries.

"The war will have rendered to France at least the service of making her better known abroad. She was generally liked, and particularly with America a traditional bond of sympathy existed. But she was considered frivolous and decadent, her depth and her qualities of heart were not widely known. The heroism of her soldiers has compelled all the world to respect her to-day. Furthermore, the foreigners, and particularly the Americans, who have come into contact with her life by working on her soil during the war, have learned to know her more thoroughly than ever before.

"It would be difficult to overstate the importance, in this connection, of the war-work done here by America: to begin with, France has deeply appreciated American generosity. But also, America has been placed in a position to observe the simplicity and the qualities of affection which inspire the French. All Americans who correspond with our soldiers, or with orphans, or with the families of orphans they have adopted, know this.

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"France has need of America economically to-day, but will need her more and more after the war. Our economic future will depend largely upon what America can do for us. But we can be of service to America economically, and our mutual help and confidence can be all the greater since there is no rivalry of interests between us.

"The lines on which our common economic and industrial future is to develop will be determined only later, by technicians, as conditions present themselves. But it is a great thing for both our countries that the bases should already be laid, and that both countries should recognize the reciprocal ties imposed upon them by their own interests."

W. D.

March 16, 1918.

The Marshal said to me to-day:

"The Germans are still to a certain extent massing troops along the British front. If they are going to attack anywhere, that would be the place for them. But the information we receive about the morale of the German army is very uncertain. The frame of mind prevalent in such divisions as have been brought back from Russia is so bad that they are not allowed on this front. And there have been mutinies among the German troops in Lorraine.

"The Germans are now colonizing the parts of Russia they have occupied. If they are allowed to continue, within six months or one year they will have a formidable organization there. Russia herself is helpless, amorphous. Only outside intervention can do anything towards saving the situation, if it is to be saved. And Japan alone is in a position to attempt it.

"I know some say that using the Japanese would only be throwing the Russians into the arms of the Germans. Notably General Gourko has expressed this opinion to me. But are not the Russians largely in the arms of the Germans already? It would certainly seem so.

"It is also said that the Japanese would be hard to get out of Siberia, if once allowed to get in. But who can keep them

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out if they want to get in by themselves? They may act alone, if we antagonize them by refusing to grant them what they want. I may even go so far as to state that, in such an event, an understanding between the Japanese and the Germans is not impossible.

"If the Japanese could be induced to give their word that they would not keep Siberia permanently, I think they would stand by what they have said. One of their racial characteristics is to like realities, they want to accomplish things; but they have great *amour-propre* as a nation, and I personally do not think they would break a word given under such conditions to all the world."

W. D.

April 5, 1918.

The Marshal said in substance:

"There is still much talk about Austria going to pieces and being tired of the war. But the fact remains that she is still fighting, and there are at the present moment 113 Austrian batteries co-operating in the battle. I do not, however, consider them capable of attempting a big offensive against Italy without the assistance of Germany.

"The hope for the future continues to rest exclusively with America. France, England, Germany are all exhausted, while still able to fight and hold on. America alone is fresh and able to make a gigantic new effort. General Pershing's action in putting his army at the disposal of the Allies in this battle was very fine. These two divisions—for he has only two divisions actually ready for fighting—may not accomplish much militarily, but the encouragement and the stimulation for America are of the utmost importance.

"There are only two things America can do for the present: hurry on sending troops and intensify their training. She is doing both, so we have every reason to be content. At the start, much valuable time was lost because there was not a sufficient proportion of French instructors for the American army. It was largely our own fault, the attitude of many of our officers was that the American army should be absorbed

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into the French army. These officers, instead of seeking only to help the American army, tried to substitute themselves for American officers. But the United States had the feeling that their army must remain the American army, and this was a very proper feeling. Now there is a better understanding, and I personally am glad that the American divisions at the front are under the command of American Generals, keeping in close contact with the French and profiting by any lessons which experience allows the French to give."

W. D.

April 29, 1918.

The Marshal said:

"What France wants from America is principally men, but trained men. You can easily raise an army of 5,000,000 or 6,000,000; [1] but they must first be transformed into regiments, and then into divisions; and then they must grow accustomed to war.

"Then you must bring that army to France. At the present time you cannot bring millions of men over to France, because you have not the necessary tonnage at your disposal.

"There are two other things we need from America, almost as much as trained men. These things are material and food.

"In material, you must supply your own army with all its needs. But you must also supply both our army and our civil administration with many things in the way of material. We need munitions and guns from you. We also need rail-

[1] "At the Armistice Pershing was preparing to keep up 2,000,000 men and making plans for the arrival of 2,000,000 more. Had the war been prolonged into 1919 the American Army would have been the preponderant force on the Allied side. This splendid military effort, the great activity of the American Navy, and the invaluable support of Americans in almost every department of State affairs were, however, only a part of the services rendered. The real splendour of American comradeship was best seen in the cheerful, uncomplaining, gallant way in the which the officers and men of the United States worked in with their Allies and subordinated their national aspirations to helpfulness towards their hard-pressed friends." Lieut.-Col. Repington, *Policy and Arms* (London, 1924), Ch. V. "The American Military System."

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road material, cars, and tracks, and we need steel and other material for our own ship-building and railroad building. So that much of what we are doing to help ourselves depends primarily upon what you can bring us.

"As for food, our French population is for the first time beginning to feel the real pinch of restrictions. We shall depend more and more upon your assistance for our food.

"We need a big American army over here as soon as possible. Much time has already been lost. Leaving aside the question as to whether or not more divisions might have been brought over during the year which has passed since America entered the war, it is certain that the divisions which have been brought over ought to have been readier to fight.

"It must be said that there has been great improvement in American methods of training, especially in France, but also at home in America, during the last five or six months. An American army of one million men, if properly trained and officered, would have considerable importance in the conduct of military operations. But the men America can send promptly may serve in with the French and the English. Brigading Americans with French and English troops is a temporary measure imposed by the exigencies of the hour. This will be modified later when a larger and more experienced army is here. But it must be said that this is the quickest method of training.

"It is not possible to say now whether the American army will be in a position to undertake a big offensive before the end of the present year. Too much depends not only upon the number of men, but upon their training, and upon their officers. The American has proved himself to be very good as a soldier, he is strong and vigorous and he has the fighting spirit. But the weak point with your army is the staff.

"The staff is the very soul of the army. The soldiers and the officers under whom they serve at the front do the fighting, but the staff must both direct and foresee everything. Its training depends upon questions not only of technical knowledge, but of experience, of time and thought, and of tradition. In France, we had those traditions going back for many

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generations, and so we were able to adapt ourselves quickly to the new conditions of modern warfare. The English, although fine soldiers, have not yet a proper staff after nearly four years of war. Their weakness at Cambrai, and in the present battle, lies in their staff. Your trouble is the same and is even greater, since your backwardness is greater than that of the English. But the American soldier will prove to be a more adaptable soldier than the British.

"The best training for a staff officer is to be had in our special staff schools. There are many of these in France, which are open to Americans. Our knowledge and experience are also at your disposal for the organization of your own staff schools. But you must be willing to profit by what we are only too ready to offer you.

"While needing your men in the fighting line, we also need you to continue sending men for organizing your own lines of communication, railroads, highways, etc. In order to help you with this, we should have to take soldiers away from our front, for we are short of men, all our valid men are mobilized. But the French are the best soldiers in the world at the present moment; they have far more value in the fighting line than they could have as workers in the rear. Consequently they cannot be spared for work at the rear, however important that work may be. While waiting for you to come to us in greater numbers, it is for us to hold the enemy back."

To a question of mine as to the effect which the possible loss of a Channel port would have upon the war, the Marshal answered:

"The question of the importance which the loss of a Channel port might have, in the conduct and the duration of the war, depends upon the port. Early in the war, the Germans captured Ostend, which was regrettable and caused us some trouble, but we have managed very well all the same.

"The fall of Calais would be very serious. Our communications with England would be interfered with, and the English would have to disembark their troops further south, perhaps at Havre. Then German submarines would have a

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better base for their operations against us, and the German fleet would gain greater freedom of movement. And, of course, the loss of Calais would mean the loss of all Belgium and a retreat of the whole British line south of Calais. Indeed, the fall of Calais would shorten the war by diminishing our means, it would sooner or later compel us to accept peace.

"However, the present situation cannot exactly be compared to the situation before the Marne was fought. If we had lost the Marne, the war would have been lost, for the Germans would have become masters of all our resources. Though Calais were lost, the war would continue, because we have men and material and the other things we need, though the situation would undeniably be a bad one.

"We do not know the exact condition of the German armies to-day. I doubt if they have enough reserves left to attain their end, that is, cutting the British army in two, reaching Calais, and driving the English back to the sea. Germany's efforts are now less considerable than they were. Their effort has been steadily decreasing in intensity since March 21st.

"But we don't yet know just how we ourselves shall be able to withstand the wear of such battles. If we don't commit too many blunders, we ought to be able to hold the Germans back. Only, we do not dispose of enough men to make a big effort in the way of a counter-offensive sufficient to drive the Germans entirely out of France. We may or may not make local counter-offensives on a rather large scale, according as developments occur.

"An inter-Allied Commander-in-Chief is an imperative necessity, though much depends upon the conditions under which he exercises his command.

"It is to America we look for the future. She has already done much for us. Because we know that she firmly intends to do far more, and because we know what we have already done and what we can continue to do while waiting for America's full effort to make itself felt, we look upon the future with confidence."

W. D.

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May 8, 1918.

The Marshal said to me to-day:

"The war has rendered to America the service of providing her with a great army. On the day when the Conscription Bill was passed, America had taken the all-important step for protecting and guaranteeing her future. She still labours under the disadvantage of not having an organized staff. But that is coming, and the creation of an American Staff College prepares the way."

W. D.

June 12, 1918.

The Marshal said to me concerning the battle between Compiègne and Noyon:

"The Germans are still eight kilometres from Compiègne. At present we are holding, while waiting for the American forces to arrive in greater numbers. The question is if this policy will suffice, in the face of what the Germans are now doing, and are certainly planning to do in the near future.

"The conduct of the American troops has more than justified the confidence of those among us who already believed in them, and has amazed others who, while not doubting their courage, were sceptical as to their immediate military value. Five American divisions are in the battle, two fighting as divisions, and the equivalent of three other divisions divided up in regiments fighting with the French forces. Now that they have been seen at work, French military authorities are fast coming to the opinion which some, including myself, have held from the start, namely that the American army must enjoy complete autonomy. This view is now held by General Pétain himself."

W. D.

August 5, 1918.

The Marshal said in substance:

"I doubt whether the Germans are in a position to attempt another big movement. During the last few weeks many things have altered for the worse from their point of view.

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"On this front they have met with heavy reverses in the course of the Allied offensive, thanks largely to the work done by the American troops, and to the inspiring example the Americans have set by their courage and their dash. The sacrifice of life being made by the Americans is great, but they are right in believing that this is the way to end the war. The Germans cannot hold out indefinitely against such attacks, and our own men, tried as they have been by four years of war, gain a fresh impulse from such contact."

W. D.

September 20, 1918.

In a conversation with me to-day, Marshal Joffre said:

"The American army has not only proved itself to be what it should be, that is, the autonomous army of a great and independent nation, but it has shown that its Generals and field officers possess of themselves all the qualities necessary for successful operations and for eventual victory. Thanks largely to what America has done, but also in a measure to the feats of the French and British armies too, the situation to-day is excellent. Although the war is not ended, since a very great effort must still be made, the end is within sight. However, prophecy is difficult, because of uncertainties in Russia, although it does not appear that Russia is capable of doing much more to help Germany.

"The Germans are prepared to hold out on the Hindenburg line. What the English have taken in the north does not affect the line seriously, and although we have gained a little near St. Quentin, we have not reached its main defences. Up in the north, the enemy has prepared defences behind Cambrai in case of need, but intends to hold the town if possible; and he will certainly try his utmost to retain both Lille and Laon. I myself do not believe that he will voluntarily fall back behind the Hindenburg line, and this for three reasons:

"First, tanks have caused a revolution in warfare during the last six months, not only because trenches and wire entanglements are no obstacle for them, but because of their

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own chief limitation, i.e., inability to cross water-courses, so that even a small river or a canal assumes great strategic importance in selecting a line of defence. The Germans have carefully planned their present positions, taking geographical questions into consideration, and they are not apt to move unless absolutely compelled.

"Secondly, the Germans cannot evacuate all or most of occupied France without at the same time evacuating all or most of Belgium; for strategic reasons, they could not hold the Belgian line unless supported on the French line. So such a retreat would be admitting absolute defeat to a people and an army already sorely feeling the weight of war, and affected by depression.

"Finally, the Germans have not yet fortified the lines of their old frontier so as to be able to hold them. According to the information we have, they have done some work along there, but will require at least four or five months more to organize a perfect system of defences comparable to that now offered by the Hindenburg Line.

"The German Government knows it is beaten in the war, and that no hope is left, because of America's growing effort which is furthermore a thoroughly organized effort. Therefore attempts to obtain peace, before a complete military defeat can come, will be multiplied. I expect Germany herself to make direct and official peace overtures this winter, but they may be no more sincere, nor reliable, than Austria's.

"Germany's great opportunity would come now, if she were to offer spontaneously to return Alsace and Lorraine to France.[1] The French nation would not admit of peace on other conditions. But if our provinces were offered to us as a solution

[1] Cf. Ambassador Sharp's letter to President Wilson, March 4, 1918, Ch. XII. "If our plan in 1917, namely, Germany to cede Alsace-Lorraine to France in exchange for the annexation of all Poland, together with Galicia, and all States to disarm; if that plan had been accepted in Berlin and sanctioned by the Entente—unless the *non possumus* in Berlin and the opposition in Rome to a change in the Pact of London had hindered any action—it seems to me the advantage would not only have been on the side of the Central Powers. Pyrrhus also conquered at Asculum." *In the World War*, Count Ottokar Czernin, London, 1919, Chapter VIII.

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for the war, and something in the way of an indemnity besides, all those people in France who are heartily weary of war, and ask only for a peace which seems to them to be just, would get together and form a party so large and so powerful that the Government would be placed in a very difficult position. In fact, if, as is highly possible, that party were to assume such proportions as to represent public opinion, the Government could not hold out against it and would have to listen to Germany, arranging as best it might with the Allies. Nothing, consequently, could be more to Germany's advantage than such a move. But I do not believe that Germany will be intelligent enough to make it; I doubt whether she will look beyond the fact that the return of Alsace and Lorraine would mean admitting defeat.

"At the present moment, the French Government is very strong, and Clemenceau is immensely popular both with the army and in the interior. As far as the public is concerned, he has made very clever use of our recent victories, inspiring confidence in the future and drawing popular sentiment together. The impression conveyed is that what has been accomplished is far more considerable than it really is, strategically speaking. For while we have improved the military position so that our victory is now certain, yet the Germans have drawn back their lines to their own chosen positions, where they are prepared and able to defend themselves; and almost everywhere their retreat has been careful and methodical. Even the magnificent victory of the American troops at St. Mihiel came after the Germans had spent three entire days evacuating their men and material. The figures of prisoners and booty taken, impressive when considered alone, are small when compared with all which had been there and had been safely removed.

"There are also other perils facing the Government, rendering its position insecure, strong as it is now.

"For instance, there is the attitude of resolute opposition adopted by the Socialists towards Clemenceau rather than towards the Government itself. They watch his every movement so as to overthrow him if possible. At the present

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moment, he is spending a great deal of time visiting the army at the front—far more than in attending to Government business. He comes back to Paris after an exhausting trip of five or six hours in motors and in the trenches; and he sets to work in his office signing papers which have been prepared for him and which he has not even the leisure to read. No method could be better for making, sooner or later, the blunder by which a man's political adversaries do not fail to profit when they are on the lookout.

"There is not now any organized party of opposition against the Government, and I do not know of any efforts on the part of any leader to oust Clemenceau. When the trouble comes which will cause his fall, Briand appears to be the most likely successor."

W. D.

The steady flow of American soldiers coming to the aid of the Allies had continued in increasing proportions. The figures will be found in President Wilson's message to Congress, December 2, 1918. Whereas a year before we had sent 145,918 men overseas, we had continued at the rate of 162,542 per month, rising to 245,951 in May, 278,760 in June, and upwards of 300,000 per month in July, August and September. The official report of General Peyton C. March, Chief of Staff, showed that a few days before the Armistice we already had 2,047,667 men turned over for transportation, the total of our Army on October 15, 1918, having been no less than 3,624,774.[1]

The truth about the large numbers of Americans on French soil was already generally known in August. But this did not cause Marshal Foch to reduce the efforts of the French. He maintained the old classes under arms, while preparing to receive the young 1920 class under the colours. I was told at the time on good authority that Marshal Foch had not only resolved that France must continue to make her maximum

[1] The texts of the reports on this subject are available to the public in the *History of the World War* by Francis A. March, with a Preface by General Peyton C. March (new Edition, Philadelphia, 1928).

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effort, but expected both England and America to do the same, in order to assure a satisfactory end for the war. A member of the British Staff having approached him to know what reductions he intended to make in the French army because of America's progressive effort, my informant said that Marshal Foch protested that no such idea had entered his head.

The Germans had drawn back slightly, under the pressure of the English, in the north; at other points of the line, they seemed disposed to take up the defensive on positions organized in advance. Premier Clemenceau informed me that the truth as to the situation was that the Germans had only fifteen divisions left, and their fighting morale was at low ebb. He added that he expected no new German offensive on a large scale, and that further counter-offensives would soon be undertaken with great hopes of success.

At the end of July, soon after the victory of our troops in stopping the Germans at Château-Thierry, thereby throwing them back from the Marne at that very dangerous point in the enemy's attempted advance on Paris, M. Clemenceau took occasion to speak in the highest terms of the bravery of our boys, yet said that he feared that they would all have to be cautioned on account of the severe losses sustained by them through a too reckless disregard of all danger. That excess of courage, from the point of view of modern warfare, was the subject of much comment among the French, and indeed the only form of criticism I heard concerning American soldiers. It was feared that imprudence might cost them too heavily, if a resumption of trench warfare became necessary. I believe the consensus of opinion was as expressed by Colonel Jean Fabry, Chief of Cabinet of Marshal Joffre, speaking to a member of my staff on August 15, who called attention to this, but added:

"The method followed until now has been the right one. The American Army jumped into the fray at the very moment when there was a return to open warfare, and this allowed them to reveal their magnificent soldierly qualities."

What stories fell from the lips of Allied brothers in a frenzy

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of enthusiasm for the valour of our boys at Château-Thierry, in the early days of the third attack of the German hosts! While I was prepared to hear almost any account, however exaggerated, of their prowess, yet it remained for General Daugan, head of the Moroccan troops, to tell me at luncheon one day, just as the shadow of the Armistice was being projected over the last desperate battlefields, that it was our American troops who led the way when a saturnalia of death was the penalty paid for facing the murderous machine-gun fire of the enemy. With a sincerity devoid of the rather common practice to indulge in speech that is designed only to please, the General told me how at one time in the engagement he found American regiments placed on each side of his own troops. He said that at the most desperate stage of the attack it was the invincible courage, coupled with the staying qualities of the American troops, that literally inspired the other Allied troops engaged.

The week of September 10 to 18, 1918, was characterized by the advance of General Pershing's men in the sector of St. Mihiel. Anything that might have been needed to popularize the American army in France after the victory of Château-Thierry was then supplied in the events which led to the releasing, for the first time since the commencement of the war, of all the occupied towns in the region of the Moselle.

After that, it became evident that the fall of St. Quentin would mean the lasting retreat of the Germans; and at about this time also came the peace message from Austria.

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CHAPTER XIV

FRANCE DEVASTATED

PERHAPS my American readers would get a better conception of the extent of French soil which paid the heaviest tribute to the invading armies of Germany, through the almost complete destruction of everything of value, if I were to compare it in size to some well-known territory in our own country. From official reports given to me by the best authority in the French Government, such devastated territory in ten Departments, whose total area is nearly 24,500 square miles, reckoned among the richest in France, and exclusive of Belgium and Luxembourg, embraced an invaded or bombarded zone of 15,600 square miles. The population of this portion in 1914 was 4,690,183, of whom it may be estimated that barely 2,000,000 remained at the time of the Armistice.

With such figures before us, a comparison may be made with the State of Indiana which would be fairly accurate, since the destruction from gun fire extended beyond the actual area of invasion. But it is to be observed that the population affected was even greater than that of Indiana. With what horror her sister States in the American Union would hear of some cataclysm of such a nature as to destroy every town and city within her confines, leaving them a mass of jumbled ruins! In many places the most arable soil in her fertile counties churned up in such a manner as to make hopeless for years to come its use for agricultural purposes! Thousands of the finest orchards cut down. Railroads, bridges, telegraph and telephone poles everywhere destroyed beyond repair; factories with their valuable machinery burned to the ground, and a sum total besides of approximately 400,000 dwellings, exclusive of business houses, levelled to the ground or rendered uninhabitable. Not a church or school-house left intact. Indeed, not a

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farmhouse, no matter how isolated, without at least its roof destroyed.

But such a visitation of ruin, if conceivable, would lack the horrors attending that of the invaded Departments of France, in that the latter such destruction was repeated several times, and twice on a maximum scale, in the late Summer and early Autumn of 1914, and in the Spring of 1918 respectively.

The extent to which France suffered materially is too often forgotten, as quite distinct from the sacrifices made by her in the lives of the young flower of her population.[1] That the war could be fought out to a successful conclusion, without indefinite delay, nowhere save at or near Germany's western frontiers was one of the factors which had constantly to be borne in mind.

When Colonel House had once said to me that should France grow tired and drop out of the war, America alone would fight Germany, I pointed out that even then America would have to fight Germany on French soil. We could not fight her on German soil till we had whipped her sufficiently to gain a foothold. And we could not thrash her on the sea, unless she chose to come and meet us, which she had not chosen to do with England. I ventured to add the significant remark that in the time or two that she emerged on the sea, Germany had given quite as good an account of herself as England, and I was not far from believing that if all the truth were known, in one of those sea fights Germany had had the better of the argument.[2]

[1] "The Great War fell with crushing force upon France more than upon any other nation. Its territory was devastated, its cities razed to the ground, its mines blown up and flooded, its railroads, canals, and bridges destroyed. It is true that the portion so devastated was but a comparatively small part of France, but it contained the most active of its manufacturing regions and was a region that produced a large part of its revenue. The rebuilding and restoring of these regions laid an immense post-war burden upon France which no other nation sustained." Report of Congressman Henry T. Rainey dated May 29, 1926, on Debt Settlement With France (House Report No. 1338, Sixty-Ninth Congress, 1st Session).

[2] For the Battle of Jutland, see among others: Admiral Jellicoe, *The Grand Fleet*; Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1916–1918*, Ch. V and VI; Edmond Delage, *Le Drame de Jutland*, in *La Revue de Paris*, November and

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I am sure that no pen or word of mouth could give a description which would adequately portray the absolute ruin wrought by the invading Germans, so complete and thorough in its execution, which these towns and little villages presented to the visitor.

Speaking as I do as an eye-witness to these scenes of desolation, not on the occasion of one visit alone but from two to four times to the same places, periods of six months sometimes intervening, I make the statement without reservation.

Seeing these sad sights extending all the way from the little town of Gerbevillers near the edge of the Vosges in Lorraine, in a line extending north and westerly from Nancy, through Rheims to Amiens and Cambrai, I early became impressed with not only the tremendous loss inflicted upon these north-eastern provinces of France, but with the almost hopeless task of rehabilitation necessary to bring back to life that stricken section.

The first of these towns I visited late in the year 1916. If in the course of the war other cities were destroyed on the grounds of military necessity, there could have been no such claim in the wanton destruction of Gerbevillers.

Here in this quiet little town of barely two thousand inhabitants, noted for its manufacture of embroidery, a small band of *chasseurs* had, in the early days of the war, put up a heroic defence, holding a bridge across the little river Agne against an overwhelming force of Bavarians. So obstinate was the defence by this handful of men that the capturers of the place, prevented from gaining access to the bridge and being forced therefore to cross the stream at another place, vowed dire vengeance. How well that threat was carried out, the musty ruins of a large portion of the town, rendered wholly uninhabitable, will, for many years to come, bear mute testimony.

One of the peculiarly atrocious things connected with the capture of the town was the shooting down in cold blood of a

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December 1928; Vice-Admiral J. E. T. Harper, *The Truth about the Battle of Jutland*; and the works of Georg von Hase.

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number of old men of the place, who were led out into a field for execution.[1] Here, as I was later to see duplicated many times, were the ruins of the magnificent château of the Marquis de Lambertye which, before its destruction, must have been of great architectural beauty. Only the shell of the stately façade and the fine grounds covering the broad acres in the rear had been left to tell of the former grandeur of the place. I was told, on visiting this ruin, that there were burned with it all the furniture and works of art of great value.

It was upon my return to Paris on that trip that I caught my first glimpse of Rheims. Having secured permission through the courtesy of the French Government to proceed with the members of my party from Epernay to Rheims, I was surprised, on the eve of my departure, to receive word from my good friend M. Léon Mirman, the Prefect at Nancy, countermanding it. However, on the following morning, as I was about to take the train to Paris, a telegram came announcing that the trip to the Cathedral City might be made. Only when I reached that city did I learn of the reason for such action.

It appeared that late in the preceding afternoon a detachment of dashing young French soldiers—all, as I was informed, under twenty years of age—had made a raid on the front trenches of the German lines as one of their first exploits in the war. With only a slight loss they succeeded in capturing a number of Germans. As it had been a well-established fact that in retaliation of such "*coups de main*" the Germans always recommenced the bombardment, such action was considered as

11 "One scene remains to be described. . . . It was on that Sunday morning the 23rd (of August, 1914, at Dinant). . . . The prisoners were massed together, nearly ninety of them—old men and young women, girls and boys, little children and babies in their mothers' arms. A platoon was called up; the colonel in command gave the word to fire, and the grey soldiers in cold blood shot down those ninety persons as they stood huddled there together. Among them were twelve children under the age of six years, six of whom were little babies whose mothers, as they stood up to face their pitiless murderers, held them in their arms." (The name and exact age of each baby follows.) Brand Whitlock, *Belgium Under the German Occupation*, Ch. XXX, "Dinant."

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imminent just before my arrival. But more quickly than had been thought, the retaliation was put into execution. Early that afternoon a large number of shells was thrown into the city. After the bombardment had ceased a reasonable respite could be counted upon, so the message was sent to me that it would be all right to carry out my original plans.

Our way lay through great stretches of vineyards, each vine supported by its pole, and looking marvellously peaceful. Yet the external signs of war were not only evident in what could be guessed of the enemy's earthworks and fortifications, but in the camouflage that hemmed in the road on either side, save in certain portions well concealed by rising ground from the German lines. Having close at hand the appearance of mere daubs arbitrarily smeared with colouring, the cloths were sometimes stretched neatly for a considerable space but often in smaller sections, and sometimes torn to strips waving in the wind and seeming to have also their utility. It was my first view of this new method of protection. Indeed, I believe it was here that camouflage was first applied with marked success.

In the distance, growing steadily larger as we followed the winding roadway, the great towers of the Rheims Cathedral appeared, their line seeming to be intact against the sky. It was only at close quarters that one appreciated the gravity of the damage done and which, already great, was alas! to become still greater in the course of succeeding months.

On entering the city I went first to the Hôtel de Ville, where the venerable mayor, Doctor Langlet, and members of the city council were assembled to receive me. He had been among the hundred hostages arrested, together with Monseigneur Neveux, Coadjutor of the Archbishop, with threats to hang them all and burn the city if the Germans were molested. This was upon the arrival of the Crown Prince, September 11, following the withdrawal of the French from the town and the entrance of Prince August Wilhelm of Prussia with his troops on the 5th. But on September 12, the change of the tide at the Battle of the Marne fortunately caused the Germans to withdraw, taking the hostages along for a short distance but releasing them at Vitry-les-Rheims.

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Probably next to the despoilment of Louvain early in the war, the destruction of Rheims, involving the serious, perhaps irreparable damage to its historic cathedral, serves to epitomize in the minds of the people the barbarity of the invading foe more than any other atrocity committed by them.

At the time I visited this stricken city early in December, 1916, there were less than 30,000 of its inhabitants remaining out of the normal population of 120,000. This number was gradually reduced in the latter days of the bombardment. Heroic as was their courage, this could be well understood. While the immense wine-cellars for which the city is famous afforded ample protection during the times of bombardment, and indeed schools were organized there for children who had insisted on remaining with their parents, yet there could at no single moment have come to the people of that devoted city the remotest sense of security or even tranquillity.

In the course of my visit on that first occasion, I took tea with his Eminence Cardinal Luçon, who spoke at length with me about the injury done to his beloved and beautiful cathedral as well as to the noble and historic city itself.[1]

He told me notably that, very soon after the beginning of the war, the population had been painfully impressed by reports of atrocities committed in Belgium. Fugitives brought stories with circumstantial details of what was occurring, and others followed with confirmation of these and additional reports. Frightened by the prospect that what the invaders had done in Belgium they might renew in France, a great part of the population of Rheims had then fled. The heads of families considered it their first duty to protect their wives and children against massacres such as were known to have occurred at Dinant. This first evacuation reduced the population to about 80,000.

But the enemy bombardments and incidental conflagrations having continued the progressive destruction of the town, many families who had desired to remain found themselves without a roof over their heads, their houses and all their furniture

[1] The facts as stated here were confirmed by Cardinal Luçon himself in a series of letters written to me shortly before his death in 1930.—W. D.

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having been swept away in a few moments. In consequence they, in turn, had no choice but to leave. Then of course almost all work had ceased; day labourers lacked bread, which they had to go and seek elsewhere. Meanwhile, the difficulty of conveying supplies of all sorts to the stricken town had increased steadily. The only roads available to convoys were in full view of the enemy, though camouflaged, and whoever sought to enter the city did so at the peril of his life. Faced by shortage of both food and fuel, the City Council encouraged civilians to leave, using persuasion wherever it was possible but in certain cases of a particularly pathetic nature, where the afflicted family wished to perish in the beloved town, their evacuation was operated by order. Thus was the population of the "bouches inutiles" further reduced—the mouths to be fed which could not contribute to the defence of Rheims.

During all this time, with indomitable bravery Cardinal Luçon had wished to remain among his flock, inspiring them with all the ardour in his own great soul. Even then, in the midst of the wreckage which grew from month to month, he was elaborating plans for the resurrection of the city of Rheims when its hour of sore trial should have come to an end.

When I returned to Rheims at the beginning of April, 1919, just before sailing for home, I learned of further and even more tragic happenings.

From some 25,000 inhabitants in January, 1917, the population had fallen to 5,000 on January 1, 1918. Then came the German drive, and the evacuation of those who had remained was ordered. On February 24, Cardinal Luçon himself officiated at a "Farewell Mass" in the chapel of the Setting Sun of the Cathedral, offered for those members of his diocese who now had no choice but to leave. The next day, only 1,500 remained, among them being the Cardinal himself. No civilians were to be tolerated by the military authorities unless their presence was admitted to be necessary. The highest tribute which could have been paid to Cardinal Luçon, a tribute higher and more eloquent than any which the human language is capable of voicing, lay in the tacit recognition that

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he should remain in Rheims as long as one single civilian was there.

Those last few had, however, been warned that at the next threatened movement on the enemy's part, they too must leave. This came on March 25, 1918. And thereafter for long and tragic weeks, while the Allied Armies under Foch and with the aid of Pershing's men were fighting and winning the battles which led to victory, Rheims was a city of ruins abandoned by all save the military who still held heroically out for her defence.

Soon after the extensive German retreat in the early Spring of 1917, I was given an opportunity of witnessing the real horrors of the war. Such towns as Chauny, Noyon, Roye, Ham, St. Quentin, Péronne, and Bapaume, which had remained in the hands of the enemy, now learned the full extent of diabolical barbarism which could be visited upon them.

With Captain Joubert as my guide, I left Paris late in March, 1917, to visit the nearest towns in this territory. In fact, it is not a mere figurative expression to say that I could still see in the wet ground, in some places, the footprints of those who had for so long held the outlying trenches, with guns turned towards these others who had been heroically defending their soil.

What a scene of desolation, after we had crossed that line! To attempt to convey a description of the conditions found in these destroyed towns would mean simply calling into requisition all the appropriate adjectives in their superlative degree. Otherwise it would be impossible to portray that extent of destruction which, after all, could be grasped only by seeing for oneself. The sceptical mind, on looking at photographs of such scenes as reproduced, might possibly be led to believe that only the worst examples had been shown. But I assure such that a far more accurate reason for selecting similar examples is, that it would be quite out of the question to find any other kind in all these towns, so thorough had been the carrying out of orders of vandalism.

I sent by cable to the Government at Washington two lengthy accounts of my trip, in part as follows:

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Telegrams from Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

Paris, *April* 1, 12 midnight, 1917.

SECRETARY OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

I yesterday visited many of the French towns recently retaken in the invaded territory, accepting an invitation extended to me several days ago. The trip was made in a military automobile. I was accompanied by the Military Attaché of the Embassy, Captain Carl Boyd. I regret to report that I found the various accounts in circulation here and doubtless forwarded to the newspapers in the United States of the deplorable conditions in those towns as in no way exaggerated. The places visited, numbering upwards of thirty, though few by comparison, had been quite destroyed by the Germans, with very few exceptions, before their evacuation. The destruction wrought in the larger towns of Ham, Roye, and particularly the once thriving and attractive city of Chauny, was complete. In many of the other small villages scarcely a house remains with its roof intact. A scene of desolation reigns everywhere over the reconquered territory. This is true not alone where the possibly excusable military operations carried out by the Germans protected their retreat by the blowing up of all the bridges and the destruction of the means of telegraphic and telephonic communications, including portions of lines of railways and the blocking of highways by the felling of many trees, but also where, as far as the eye could see, nearly all the fruit trees had either been cut down or girdled so as to ruin them completely. The towns were destroyed for no seeming military reason. Also every private house along the country's highways, together with some of the most beautiful châteaux of great value, had been completely gutted by explosives or by fires systematically planned. I was also informed that before the retreat commenced the agricultural implements found on the farms were destroyed. Blackened walls of what must have been extensive manufacturing establishments were to be seen in many places, the salvage of which, including likewise that of most of the other structures destroyed, would scarcely pay for the removal of the material.

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In some of the towns the Germans had reduced the churches and the cathedrals to a mass of ruins, either by fires or heavy charges of explosives.

I was told by the mother of six children, at Ham, that her husband and two daughters, aged fifteen and eighteen, had been carried away by the Germans upon their evacuating the town. Upon her remonstrating the Germans told her that as an alternative she might find their bodies in the canal in the rear of her home. I was informed by the same woman that out of that town's total population several hundred people had been compelled to accompany the Germans.[1] Nearly half of this number were women and girls above fifteen years of age. There is the belief that a large number of the French people in the evacuated towns and surrounding country were forced by the Germans to go with them in their retreat, as comparatively so few are now to be found.

After traversing a distance of more than one hundred miles in this reconquered territory, I left there with the conviction that there is no parallel in history for such thorough destruction either by a vanquished or victorious army.

SHARP.

(Undated)

It may be desirable to learn in a few words of the widespread distress that prevails throughout those invaded districts because of the very wantonness of the retreating army in destroying not only everything that would contribute to the bare existence of the population but of the means of their earning a livelihood. The Germans carried away or destroyed every article of furniture in the houses. In many places where the buildings were not actually destroyed a methodical program of removing or destroying every door and every window-frame in the house was carried out, so that even in some places where lack of time had not given opportunity to destroy the roof

[1] According to Charles S. Heymans, efforts were made at the time to surround these deportations with a conspiracy of silence, all statements concerning them being discredited in advance as "mendacious" or "exaggerated." See *La Vraie Mata Hari*, in *Le Mercure de France*, December 1, 1929.

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overhead, the houses were left entirely untenable in an unusually severe stress of weather. A local paper contains the following description of these scenes, written by a German correspondent, which originally appeared in the *Lokal Anzeiger*. From personal observation I can vouch for the entire accuracy of this picture.

"All is a desert across which the road is the last vestige of a vanished civilization, and the road itself will disappear in a few days. All the cross-roads are mined and the mine-chambers charged. Motor-driven ploughs are at work in the fields rendering them impassable for the enemy's artillery and convoys. Troops on the march pass, with wagons laden with provisions and utensils. They have left nothing in the positions evacuated. What has not been destroyed has been burned or smashed. The soldiers have blown up their shelters and rendered their wells and former quarters useless. The walls that remain standing after the fire will be destroyed with explosives. Even cellars have been blown up. All this was not done in a day. The work was carried out methodically during weeks and months, in order not to arouse the suspicion of the enemy."

The wife of the Mayor of Noyon told me that one of the most urgent needs at present confronting the people of that town is that of tools with which to engage in the work of reconstruction, as the inhabitants have been deprived of every implement which would enable them to repair or rebuild their homes. The farmer is in no way more favored, for all the agricultural implements have likewise been destroyed.

While food is being supplied to the stricken inhabitants by the Government of France through the military organizations, yet they are sorely in need of boots and shoes particularly, also blankets and bedding. There is a great need especially in the devastated regions for all kinds of farm implements as well. The needless and widespread ruin wrought by the retreating enemy in so many ways upon this unhappy portion of France, even affecting the very landscape in the denuding of forests, the cutting down of thousands of stately trees which lined for miles the country highways and constituted their charm, and

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the destruction of historic monuments, will not be effaced for a generation.

SHARP.

Immediately after leaving Noyon, as I proceeded on my way, orchards completely and scientifically devastated came into view. The historic castle of Ham had been blown up by a mine, strangely enough the tower remaining untouched. The organ pipes had been taken away from the church here as in the cathedral at Noyon. Beyond Ham lies the village of Esmery-Hallon, once a prosperous farming centre which now presented still another instance of the burning of villages and agglomerations having no military value whatever.

A particularly striking example of ruthlessness was mentioned to me, the house belonging to a lawyer at Champien, the interior of which had been methodically sacked although it outwardly remained in good condition. Not only had the furniture been carried off but the staircase, the walls, and the roof had been torn or hacked away with hatchets or other instruments. Near this town, at Margny-aux-Cerises, two battering-rams had been used to demolish cottages.

At Roye the City Hall square had been blown up by a mine, the City Hall and most of the surrounding houses collapsing into the excavation. The town of Nesle, on the Somme, had perhaps suffered less in material damage, but here the citizens and country people had been exposed to the horrors of deportations,[1] over a hundred women and young girls being carried off by the Germans from this region alone.

A certified order for one of these deportations was shown to me, as follows:

"Mlle R——, rue du Faubourg St. Echouart, shall on the 17th at 7 o'clock in the morning German time go to the Soldatenheim (Faubourg St. Marcoul) to leave on the march.

[1] The number of deportations in April and May, 1916, from the Roubaix, Tourcoing, and Lille regions was officially estimated, on the strength of detailed information gathered by the French Foreign Office, at 25,000. They consisted of girls aged between 16 and 20, and both men and women up to the age of 55. For the Note addressed on the subject to the Neutral Powers, with some 240 affidavits annexed, see French White Book, 1916.

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"She will be allowed to take the luggage which she can herself carry.

"It will be necessary for her to have food for one day.

"Signed: ORTSKOMMANDATUR
"NESLE."

Mr. James W. Gerard explained as follows the principle of these deportations, which occurred not only in Northern France but also on the Balkan Front:[1]

"It seems that the Germans had endeavored to get volunteers from the great industrial towns of Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing to work these fields, but after the posting of the notices calling for volunteers only fourteen had appeared. The Germans then gave orders to seize a certain number of inhabitants. . . . A man would come home at night and find that his wife or children had disappeared, and no one could tell him where they had gone, except that the neighbors could relate that German non-commissioned officers and a file of soldiers had carried them off."[2]

I would remark here that although certain categories of atrocities committed by the invading German soldiers have been exaggerated, too often a few cases being magnified into many by repetition of the story,[3] yet instances of atrocities did exist, taking many and sometimes very unusual forms. I have in mind, for example, the case of one of my friends who, happening to be in Switzerland in the early months of the war,

[1] For the German principle of deportations as applied notably in Belgium and France, and by the Turks to Armenians, see *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, pp. 364–366; 381; 407.

[2] *My Four Years in Germany*, Ch. XVII.

[3] "I do not believe all the atrocity stories. But . . . I myself have heard an officer calmly describe the shooting of a seven-year-old Belgian girl-child, the excuse being that she had tried to fire at an officer." James W. Gerard, *Face to Face With Kaiserism*, p. 41. An official report of General von Bissing, dated Brussels, February 28, 1915, taken from the official German archives and telling how 46 priests had been shot and one hanged, the Curé of Spontin being finally shot after being struck under the chin with the butt of a gun, wounded thrice in the neck with a bayonet, bound hand and foot, and "suspended by his hair," was printed by *Le Soir* of Brussels in June 1928 and quoted in *Figaro* of June 22.

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came by sheer accident upon information concerning secret German plans involving an important French fortified area where adequate preparations had not been made against an attack. For reasons best left unexplained here, this place might not only have been taken at that juncture, but under conditions such as to entail complications of a highly embarrassing nature for France and of consequent advantage to Germany. The fact that my friend held such information exposed him to being the victim of three attempts upon his life, from which he escaped, though not entirely unscathed.[1]

Through the courtesy of the British Military authorities, I was given the opportunity to traverse the territory commencing about fifteen miles east of Amiens and embracing such towns as Péronne, Bapaume, Albert, Arras, etc., in the Spring of 1917.

At Amiens our little party, consisting of several members of my Embassy staff, was placed in the charge of Major Lytton,[2] whose father had been British Ambassador to France nearly thirty years before and whose grandfather was Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, the novelist. A more charming and withal obliging officer I have never met. With that nonchalant air and breezy manner which characterized so many of his brother-officers during the war, he showed to us every possible attention.

As it was my desire to give more careful examination to what I saw than merely hurriedly passing through the towns, an itinerary was arranged which, on the first day, would embrace the territory extending to Péronne; then returning in the evening to Amiens, the following day would be devoted to the territory lying about Bapaume.

While perhaps the destruction in those towns differed very little in character from that which I had previously seen in those located farther to the south, where the French troops

[1] The full history of the "Secret War" in France will shortly be told in a series of volumes by Major Georges Ladoux, former head of the French Counter Espionage Services.

[2] Major the Hon. Neville Lytton has written: "I took Mr. Sharp, the United States Ambassador to France, to see Péronne, and his feelings of rage were as great as mine and I know that he wrote a despatch to his President expressing his feelings most definitely." *The Press and the General Staff*, pp. 79–80.

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were in command, yet there was an element which differentiated the manner in which some of the smaller towns, particularly, had been destroyed. This was due to the fact that a number of such towns had been terribly shelled in a cross fire between the two contending armies, before the actual retreat of the German forces had been made. This was evidenced by the havoc created on some of the battlefields, particularly noticeable where wooded tracts had intervened.

Along the highways at one such place where formerly must have stood a beautiful wood composed of large trees, there was nothing now left standing but their bared and splintered trunks. Though the season was late enough for the appearance of verdure in other forests through which we had passed, yet here there was not a semblance of vegetable life. In not a few trunks were still to be seen unexploded shells, and everywhere about on each side of the highway and across the fields were myriads of shell-holes, making the surface resemble a billowy sea. The artillery duel at such places must have been so intense as to baffle description.

There vividly dwells in my mind yet the appearance of what formerly must have been a thriving little village of two or three thousand inhabitants. The locality was called Bois de Delville, but the English had nicknamed it "Devil-wood" because of the severity of the punishment there. From its appearance after this carnage, as I saw it in riding along that Spring morning through what had once been its busiest street, I dubbed it to my companions as a "tooth-pick" town. The shells of the contending artillery forces sent over into the town had crumbled to pieces the concrete walls of the houses, leaving everywhere a regular forest of supporting timbers or studding which, at a distance, looked like a forest of standing tooth-picks. I do not recall, as I passed through that village, seeing a single building with a roof left on, nor, in fact, anything that could have resembled its former self.

At the hotel, before my departure, I was introduced by Major Lytton to his friend John Masefield who had already written a number of interesting works on the war, one of the most noted, as I remember, being on the campaign at Gallipoli.

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As I proceeded on my journey that day, labourers were hastily repairing the highway which the retreating enemy troops had blown up, whenever their time in such a hasty retreat gave them the opportunity. On each side of the roadway I saw many tanks bearing the unmistakable evidences of the hard fate through which they had passed. Here was one shattered to pieces, there was a large one which had encountered natural obstacles in the topography of the ground which it could not overcome, and it had been stalled. Others were found in deep ditches, but all had evidently been put out of commission by the fire of the enemy.

Involuntarily my thoughts were of those brave fellows who had been inside them, and I wondered whether they had shared the fate of the little iron houses which had sheltered them. From all that I learned in the days to follow—for even then the use of these new implements of war had not been fully tested—I am led to believe that no class of soldiers was called upon to face a greater peril than those who were selected for the tank service. I am firm in this belief from the stories told to me by those in a position to know, of the early fate of the tanks used by the British troops.

It is said that at their introduction these unwieldy monsters inspired more terror among the Germans than any other force that they were called upon to face. Special attention was devoted by them to combating this new danger, and gunners with specially devised rifles were trained for defence against it.[1]

But perhaps the crowning infamy of this programme of annihilation of everything that had value on the soil of France was the wanton destruction of the historic places of worship. No excuse could be offered for the work of vandalism which left only jagged fragmentary walls of such historic buildings as

[1] "So great has been the effect produced upon the German infantry by the appearance of British tanks that in more than one instance, when for various reasons real tanks were not available in sufficient numbers, valuable results have been obtained by the use of dummy tanks painted on frames of wood and canvas." *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches*, edited by Lieut.-Col. J. H. Boraston, p. 302.

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the Cathedrals of Soissons, St. Quentin, Noyon, and edifices of lesser grandeur but none the less of historic interest in a multitude of the smaller towns throughout those unhappy provinces.

As mere antiquity itself often gives the chief value to one's possessions, so any attempt to assess the value in estimating reparation for the destruction of such time-honoured edifices must be useless. Many of those structures had passed unharmed through the wars of previous centuries as being something entirely too sacred for even the passions of men to profane. They had been looked upon as some precious heritage handed down to posterity by those who had been inspired by the awakening from the slumber of the Middle Ages to an exalted conception of a Christian religion. Their matchless grace and dignity in their every part signified as much. Indeed, as I have sometimes looked at the stately pile of Salisbury, with its unrivalled spire, I have thought what a living refutation it was of the conception of man to-day of the inferiority of those who built it in the time of Chaucer. Many such structures, too, on the soil of France must produce the same feeling. What traveller has not been moved by seeing ahead of him far across the country, as he approaches these French towns and cities, the vaulted roofs and spires of such structures, dominating by their height and size everything else about them? Their builders had, by their works made visible to man, given majesty to the faith that was in them.

Many of these destroyed temples of worship had stained glass windows to which the lost art of centuries before had given priceless value. Others had organs which had delighted a dozen generations of people. They were, indeed, the very soul of the community. Homes and business houses of the former dwellers in such communities may be rebuilt and the new structures may carry with them more pride and appreciation than those destroyed, but as for these priceless monuments which gave to them an enduring fame, it would almost be a mockery to attempt to replace them; besides, the people of those unfortunate towns have, by their losses, been made as poor in purse as they are depressed in spirit.

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Nothing, I think, in the course of all my trips impressed me more than the church in the ruined town of Albert. High above the church door, and spared though the building itself had severely suffered, the figure of the Virgin had been bent over, undamaged, in such an attitude as to be seemingly protecting the town below. For many long months, during which the bombardment continued, this figure was preserved as it were miraculously, becoming a spectacle much talked of throughout France and popularized by means of photographs.

When, as was inevitable, the statue eventually fell under the continued fire, it was to a great extent forgotten. But perhaps the symbol remained in an even clearer sense than before. Was not the work of reconstruction already beginning? Had not the promise which had seemed to be conveyed to these brave people signified that this, and other towns destroyed by the fire and steel of shells, should rise again from the desolation of their complete ruin?

Nowhere was the full importance of this work of reconstruction more evident than in the little Lorraine town of Vitrimont, which always appeared to me as typical of what material suffering could signify and what human aid, intelligently administered, could do to assuage the wound. This was, I believe, at one time the only village which stood entirely reconstructed by Americans. The task had been undertaken and was supported financially by Mrs. William H. Crocker of San Francisco through the personal direction of Miss Daisy Polk.[1]

I had visited Vitrimont at the end of 1916, and I had thus been in a position to judge for myself. The conspicuous feature of the undertaking was certainly that the Americans devoting themselves there had solved the problem of respecting the traditions of the inhabitants, while meeting the necessities for economy as well as for improvements and hygiene.

In the despatch which I sent to the State Department reporting upon my trip, I said in part:

"I cannot give too much praise of the officials, both military and civil, of the cities visited—particularly Nancy, Lunéville,

[1] Later married to General de Buyer.

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and Rheims—who showed us so many courtesies during this trip on which I was accompanied, among others, by M. André Chevrillon, the distinguished French writer. In truth, I might also well add that everywhere the most kindly disposition was shown towards everything American by the people, whose fortitude under such trying conditions deserves the greatest commendation.

"The humanitarian work undertaken by Mrs. Crocker, through the indispensable aid and efficiency of Miss Polk, will be most welcome to the people of Vitrimont, many of whom have no shelter above their heads. Not alone is the rebuilding of a considerable portion of the town contemplated, but in various ways—chiefly through the widening of the streets and their embellishment by the planting of shade trees—the conditions of the village are to be much improved. It is to be hoped that this work so auspiciously begun at Vitrimont by Mrs. Crocker may find a duplicate in other devastated towns of that neighborhood equally in need of help."

I learned subsequently that Mrs. Crocker had herself visited Vitrimont for the formal consecration of the restored village in the summer of 1920, being greeted by the old chimes which had happily been spared in the little church. The paper *La France* gave a charming description of the village as "a veritable joy to the eye in its new setting of red tiles, long alleys of maple, chestnut, and linden trees, planted the year before, putting forth their first leaves as if to do their part in presenting the picture of a perfect village."

Equally wise and generous in its inspiration, but conceived and executed on a more extensive scale, was the very exceptional work of "The American Committee for Devastated France," organized in the winter of 1916–1917 with the object of aiding in all ways the civilian population in the war-ruined Departments, and operating particularly in the Aisne. No sooner had von Hindenburg executed his retreat from his famous "line" than this Committee actively set about its task, caring at first for thirty entire villages, the number being increased to sixty within six months, and progressing steadily as time went by.

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Food was supplied to the civilians; house-keeping and garden utensils were provided; live-stock and poultry were brought in to restock the farms; tractors were supplied; mechanics were given tools; grain and vegetable seeds were distributed; little shops were stocked with household necessaries; schools, dispensaries, hospitals were equipped; poultry farms were started to supply food and give employment to incapacitated soldiers.

Mrs. Anne Murray Dike[1] was the "*Commissionnaire*" in France, with an executive committee and a board of directors prominent in which were Miss Anne Morgan and Mrs. Lewis Buckley Stillman.

By March, 1918, more than eight hundred families had been reinstated and made partially self-supporting; five hundred children who had suffered from German brutality were fed, clothed, doctored, and given special mental and moral training to bring them back to normality. Enough grain had been raised to feed four thousand persons for one year; seven thousand fruit trees had been set out, and one million vegetable plants.

In June, 1918, the Committee operated stationary and travelling canteens serving between five and eight thousand soldiers a day; one canteen even served forty-five thousand in a single week.

For some time the Committee maintained a work-room in Paris where refugee women were given sewing to do and were paid for it; and during its entire existence the Committee had a warehouse in Paris, under Mrs. Stockley and Mrs. Pierpont and eventually Miss Louise Sedgwick Rackemann as Directress, where were received all gifts and whence were sent out all shipments to the devastated regions in the Aisne; one item alone being 180,000 kilos of foodstuffs.

In the reconstruction of churches, public buildings, houses

[1] As an expression of gratitude for the work done by the Committee for Devastated France in the Chemin des Dames region, the Académie d'Agriculture elected Mrs. Dike to full membership in 1924, this being the first time the honour had ever been conferred on a woman. Mrs. Dike died in 1929.

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and schools the Committee had a great share, working with the "Building Co-Operative Society" recognized by the Government.

Five libraries organized by Miss Carson and run on the American plan at Anizy-le-Château, Vic-sur-Aisne, Coucy-le-Château, Soissons, and Blérancourt; an Association of Social Hygiene founded and endowed; Agricultural Syndicates; and Miss Anne Morgan's Museum at Blérancourt,[1] were to remain as lasting monuments to the Committee's work.

The interest taken by America in such enterprises was unflagging. Yet the impression which one ever brought away from a visit to these sorely stricken spots was, how much always remained to be done! I recall that very shortly before I left France at the close of my mission, Mrs. Sharp received a request in February, 1919, from the Maryland Daughters of the American Revolution to investigate the devastated village of Tilloy, as they wanted more information in regard to its condition before assisting the National D.A.R. to reconstruct it. The State Chaplain, Mrs. Charles Linthecum, a personal friend of Mrs. Sharp's, therefore volunteered to write to her. Through the American Army authorities, this region being then in our zone, Mrs. Sharp obtained permission for a visit and was distressed to note the deplorable conditions prevailing on all hands. Of course she immediately wrote a letter to encourage the work which the D.A.R. planned to do.

Ever since the hurried retreat of the German armies before the victorious Allied forces had come to my knowledge, I had expressed to the Paris Ministry of War, through the usual channels of the Foreign Office, my earnest desire to visit St. Quentin, and to be, if possible, the first civilian to set foot in the reconquered city whose evacuation seemed to be imminent.

I had, indeed, in one of my cabled reports to the State Department some weeks before, given it as my judgment that, on account of the stubbornness with which that town had been held by the enemy, its evacuation would go very far to prove the final cracking of the Hindenburg line.

My request met with much resistance, based partly upon

[1] In the charge of M. André Girodie as curator.

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apprehensions lest the enemy might attempt making an offensive return, after his evacuation on October 1st, but partly also upon risks from shell-fire and more particularly asphyxiating bombs. I had nevertheless quite resolved to undertake this trip.

I had, on a previous occasion, been able to see this town from a considerable distance when it was in the possession of the Germans. That had been the year before, when in the company of Captain Joubert, I had expressed a desire to get near St. Quentin—then invested by the combined French and English troops to recover it from the Germans.

Proceeding northward on that March day, I had reached a point which was a veritable freak of nature. I had heard much talk of the look-out of Prince Eitel Frederick, the second son of the Kaiser, from which place of observation he had only just been driven out by the Allied forces.

Rising abruptly from a fairly level stretch of ground extending for a considerable distance about was a hill, if such it could be called. At the top, which was well nigh flat, it covered scarcely a hundred square rods of ground. On this elevation was a sort of hunting lodge, resembling in design the little châlets to be found on the side of the Swiss mountains. Above the door were the arms of St. Hubert—patron of the hunt. With an open balcony all around it, there was but one sheltered room in the centre. Outside of the look-out itself was a rustic fence which some crude artist had constructed in such a manner as to spell out the words "Eitel Frederick." Inside the enclosure were benches and tables, giving it the appearance of an outdoor beer garden, which one might well accredit to this phlegmatic son of royalty.

From this point observations could be taken covering a radius in some directions of eight or ten miles. In the distance, to the north, I could easily see the vaulted roof of the famous old church of St. Quentin, to the complete destruction of which I was eventually to be a witness. Far to the east and south-east, at intervals of seconds, great shells were bursting and sending back their dull roar.

I therefore had a sentimental desire to be able to enter the

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precincts of St. Quentin in 1918. But I considered it my duty to gather first-hand evidence as to the conditions under which the victorious Allied forces were following up the enemy, forecasting a peace which I was now convinced must be near at hand. Of course I furthermore purposed to send in a report of the situation to the State Department.

Somewhat sooner than I expected, I was courteously given the necessary permission by the French Government. Early on the morning of Monday, October 7, 1918, Major Bloch-Laroque and Lieutenant Stanislas de Montebello called at my residence in two large Packards for this trip. My party included, in addition to myself, my son George and Mr. Warrington Dawson of my Embassy staff. I was to have been accompanied also by M. Klobukowski, who was French Minister Plenipotentiary at Brussels at the outbreak of the war and later Commissioner-General of the Paris Maison de la Presse, a branch of the Foreign Office, and M. Georges Grosclaude, connected with the French Propaganda Service. At the last moment, M. Grosclaude proved to be unable to go. M. Klobukowski joined me later, in St. Quentin itself, having come by another route.

Our party passed through Senlis and Compiègne, the latter particularly being sadly different from the Compiègne I had known, as it was now a mass of ruins. At Mont Renaud, a little more than three miles from Noyon, we were met by a French officer whose duty it was to escort us in that region and show us the scenes of the late action. I noted that the forest crowning Mont Renaud had been shattered to pieces by shell-fire, and the ground was burrowed with trenches in all directions; the point was an important one, as it was there that the French had held the Germans back in their Spring advance. About half a mile away some large barracks had been occupied by the Germans, and of course Noyon further on. It was a sad spectacle to see the trees so pitifully battered, whose colouring should be so beautiful at this season.

At the entrance to Noyon, guards called upon us to halt and we left our cars to walk through the streets which, the French officers assured us, were quite safe now in spite of the signs

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"No Thoroughfare, Danger of Death," still standing in many places. I understood, however, that where these signs had been left it was because of suspicions that the Germans had put mines and there might be a risk in entering the subterranean refuges, although none was entailed by walking in the adjacent streets. It is an established fact that many lives were lost at Noyon and much destruction done to property by the explosion of such mines and traps.

Only eighteen months before I had visited Noyon with my son and had beheld it almost intact; it was stated that it had been spared as the birth-place of John Calvin. I could now say that I had never seen a large town more completely and thoroughly destroyed. Practically every house in the city had been dynamited. The grand Cathedral of such historic fame, whose foundations were laid more than eight centuries ago, was also in a very much ruined condition. Its beautiful stained glass windows had all been broken, a portion of the roof destroyed, and its walls in many places irreparably shattered. The impressive front had also been seriously damaged by heavy charges of dynamite, placed with much design and hard labour where the greatest amount of destruction would follow.

Sculptured figures of the saints were ruthlessly strewn about the floors, and a large figure of the Saviour had been thrown over into a corner of the adjoining chapel. Great havoc had been wrought in the court of the ancient cloisters. Fronting the square near by, on which had once faced the former Hôtel de Ville, the City Hall of Noyon, now in complete ruins, I looked in vain for the hospitable château in which I had lunched with General Humbert, whose military headquarters had been there on my former visit.

Everything in the square, as indeed throughout the city, was a mass of ruins resembling the worst portion of what I had seen of the city of Rheims during its many bombardments. Even the ancient monument rising in the centre of the square—the tablets of which recited the fact that here in Noyon Childéric was buried, Charlemagne had been crowned here more than twelve centuries ago, and here also Hugues Capet had been elected king—had been broken and left a half-ruin.

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At Beaulieu, near Noyon, General Debeney, in command of the First Army and the St. Quentin sector, had established his headquarters in a house partly ruined but hastily put into condition for his use by German prisoners of war.

I was informed that the extensive damage done was due to new methods adopted this year by the Germans for the destruction of property in France. Whereas in previous years they had placed charges of powder next to a wall, blowing in the wall so as to cause the fall of the roof, this year they had been putting the powder in house-cellars, thereby causing far graver damage.

General Debeney invited us to lunch with him and his staff, an invitation which we gladly accepted. The General is a somewhat tall man, very well-built, with dark searching eyes. He is a great admirer of Marshal Joffre and paid him a high tribute, calling him " our great master," and declaring that he had, by his strategy from 1914 to 1916, laid the foundations for what was now being done by the victorious Allied Armies.[1] In a conversation with me not long before, Marshal Joffre on his side had referred to General Debeney as one of the very best generals France had.

My last act before leaving Paris upon this trip had been to pass by the Chancery in order to send a telegraphic message to the Department dealing with the sentiments of France towards German suggestions for an armistice. As this was a subject requiring particularly careful handling, I made a point of asking General Debeney what was the feeling among the *Poilus* as to these proposals. He replied that he had not yet had sufficient time to inquire into the matter, but that in any case it was highly necessary that the answer should be sent promptly. The reason for this was that the time which had passed since the latter half of September, when peace rumours

[1] It is an established but generally overlooked fact that Marshal Joffre's strategy in the 1914–1916 period saved the positions on which Marshal Foch manœuvred in 1918 to win the war. See the dedication to Marshal Joffre in *The Gift of Paul Clermont* by Warrington Dawson, which drew attention to this many years ago. For Ambassador Sharp's visit to Saint Quentin, see *Paul Clermont's Story and My Own*, pages xxx–xxxi, Introduction to the new American edition of this work (Chicago 1928).

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began to pervade the air, tended somewhat to exasperate French soldiers at the front, who were inquiring as to the prospects of a winter campaign. At present the spirit among them was still excellent, but it was important that their hopes should not be raised and be allowed to subsist, only to be dashed by a rejection of offers unacceptable to the Allies. It appeared that all newspapers arriving from Paris were seized upon with avidity by the soldiers, a big group immediately forming and inquiring for news. If there was to be a winter campaign, the soldiers must know it at once and they would prepare for it with the undaunted spirit which they had shown for already more than four years.

General Debeney furthermore observed that he had a fifteenth proposition to add to President Wilson's fourteen articles, the said proposition consisting of the only words of English he knew: "Down the Boches." He went on to say that what should be done would be to oblige Germany not only to furnish an indemnity in money but in labour, and that this could be effected by having the entire year's military class come to work in France to repair during a certain number of years the damage done. This system, he explained, would also have the advantage of reducing by so much Germany's military strength.

In reply to an inquiry from me concerning our participation in the war and French opinions on this subject, General Debeney paid a handsome tribute to our First Division which was under him for some time, as he informed me, first near Toul and then in the proximity of Noyon at Cantigny. He was exceedingly laudatory of the general bearing as well as of the conduct of our men. He told me that he had got to know General Bullock and his officers very well, adding with a laugh that they used to call him "Papa." He went on to say that what France and her Allies now needed was war material of all kinds. In his estimation, the period had now been reached when we were approaching all the effective forces demanded by the situation, so that we should endeavour to send especially material; men, of course, as we could, but material and always more material.

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The General expressed himself in disapproving terms as to my plan for proceeding on my way to St. Quentin. He was even somewhat sceptical as to the possibility of my party arriving there, and did not attempt to conceal a certain amount of anxiety for my personal safety as well as for that of those who accompanied me.[1]

Our way took us through the village of Ham, which was reduced to a state of complete ruin. I was informed that the damage had not been by shell-fire, however, Ham having been taken as a result of an enveloping movement subsequent to which the Germans had systematically burned the place. Many signs of German occupation subsisted in the form of notices, sign-posts, etc. The country round about was truly desolate, a sad spectacle of wanton destruction. The fields, long unused to any plough, were growing wild, and the roads were in very bad condition, all the bridges being down and the railroad tracks torn up. I had ample time for making such observations because I was being constantly stopped for the passage of troops or supplies. Never before on any of my trips had I witnessed so much movement consisting of men on the march upon the highway and long columns of supply camions. A great quantity of German material, including many hundred shells, had been abandoned all along the road. An officer of the general staff told me that in that sector alone the French had taken enough booty to fill 200,000 camions.

As we approached St. Quentin we changed motors, leaving behind the big luxurious Packards in favour of some light plain cars whose utility was soon to be evident to us. The going was very slow, owing to the number of camions proceeding in both directions and also to the condition of the roads damaged by the traffic and by the explosion of shells. At one point we had to turn back, retracing our steps for several miles, as we

[1] At one moment General Debeney requested Major Bloch-Laroque to take me aside and ask me if the Ambassador very greatly wished to proceed to St. Quentin. I replied that he did. The General then asked if I could not persuade the Ambassador to turn back. I answered that if the General asked me to transmit a direct message from him to that effect I would do so, but I knew the Ambassador would be keenly disappointed. The General did not insist.—W. D.

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learned that the road had been cut. Needless to say, our way did not lie along the main highway which was constantly under shell-fire. Finally we took a road across country, as bad a road as I have ever seen, our progress becoming steadily slower as we proceeded. The shell holes to be avoided were so numerous that we sometimes plunged into one before we knew it. Our path even led us behind a battery of 155's and we were regarded curiously by the men working their guns. Soon we were obliged to leave our cars to proceed on foot, walking over a plank road in the course of building by a number of Annamites.

I then met with an experience for which I had not bargained. While technically it was true that the town had been evacuated, yet as a matter of fact an artillery duel was going on between the two opposing armies on the very day that I visited the city. The thunder of shells was in the air continuously. My attention was called to the landing of some shells near the main road, which we had been careful not to take. The French batteries were replying vigorously, and an officer pointed out the objective to me so that I was able to locate where the shells were striking. On an eminence at the outskirts of the city, I was startled by a terrific explosion of a shell not more, perhaps, than a hundred rods distant from me. Then I realized that we were in shelling distance of an enemy that had for four years continuously held on to that territory. Hearing the sharp crack of one of the pieces of artillery beneath a hill not more than fifty rods ahead of me, I asked what battery it was, and was told that the Americans had some guns at that particular point.

Passing along on foot with my conductor, I was told that I was the first civilian except the Mayor who had entered that city since its evacuation—in other words, the first friend of the Allied cause who had been permitted to go inside the city limits since the beginning of the war. The Deputy from St. Quentin had tried to enter the day before, but the town was being too heavily shelled. We had our gas masks with us ready to put them on at a moment's notice, though it so happened that we did not need them.

In the city I was authorized to go only in districts considered

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as safe, having been cleared of mines. Two regiments of German prisoners were used for the work, these men being obliged to sleep in the houses visited as a means of eliminating foul play, and being furthermore warned that two prisoners would be shot for every mine which exploded "accidentally."

I was asked to abridge my visit and leave as soon as possible, as it appeared that the Germans were beginning to train their guns on the town, possibly suspecting our visit or else a movement of troops there. I had been in St. Quentin about one hour all told, when at 5 p.m. I regained the light car which had been brought up by another road so as to wait at the outskirts of the town.

Because of the German gun-fire and the approach of night, we now chose the main road which had been so badly shelled a short time before, our chief consideration being at present speed. There were six of us in the light car speeding over the uncertain roadway at not less than fifty miles an hour, hearing behind us the exploding shells which seemed to be progressing in our wake, the range fortunately never being modified swiftly enough for the shells to reach us.

I found the large motors were at the spot where I had left them, the headquarters of General Nollet,[1] the General in immediate command of the St. Quentin sector under General Debeney. He proved to be a short and rather stout man, blue-eyed and white-haired and very amiable.

Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

Paris, *October* 29, 1918.

Referring to my telegram No. —— of October 16, 1918, I have now the honor to make a rather more extended report upon my recent visit to that portion of France so lately evacuated by the German armies. Through the courtesy of the Minister of War, I was permitted to pay a two-day visit, in a military car, to this unhappy region—the scenes of so many battles and consequent devastation. . . .

It was at St. Quentin that I was to see what thoroughness of destruction, so ingenious and systematic in its application,

[1] General Nollet was later Minister of War in the Herriot 1924 Cabinet.

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could be wrought by explosives of the highest power. No efficiency in constructive work—in the building up of monuments attesting the works of civilization—could surpass that here shown in its undoing. Though the creative task might have involved the patient labor of years, to undo it required but the malevolent work of hours.

As I walked through the silent streets, lined with buildings whose friendly roofs of former days had sheltered the home-loving people of this destroyed city, and saw nothing but jumbled heaps of stone and broken timbers, I was reminded of a visit I once paid to the city of Pompeii. The mighty power of Vesuvius to destroy had not been greater than that of these expert vandals. Though but a week had passed since its inhabitants had fled at the command of the German officers, yet, in the silence of this great ruin, where not a thing of life was to be seen, it appeared as though it were a condition of centuries. It was as though some convulsion of nature had shaken every building down to its very foundation. For nearly a mile from the outskirts of the city, the point of my entrance, to the Grande Place, around which are grouped some of the notable buildings of the city, I walked through these scenes of desolation.

Strangely contrasting with the quietude of this wide-spread ruin were the roar of cannon and the whistling of the shells hurtling above us, evidencing the activity of the artillery of both friend and foe. During my stay of an hour's duration several hundred of these shells must have passed high above my head into the ranks of either army. Now and then I could see the places where they fell, instantly followed by the upheaval of earth and clouds of smoke thrown into the air.

Perhaps the saddest ruin of all was that of the famous Cathedral of St. Quentin—in some respects one of the most noted in France. Bad as was the condition of the stately pile at Noyon, that of the sacred edifice of worship at St. Quentin could hardly be dignified by the name of a ruin. Only jagged columns where once it had stood could now be seen; everywhere else it was levelled to the ground in heaps of broken masonry.

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As stated in my telegram No. —— M. Clemenceau told me, in reference to this particular church, that they had found, at the base of each of the columns supporting the vaulted roof, an aperture into which it was designed to place a charge of high explosives to be connected with a battery for simultaneous action if it became necessary.

The officers accompanying me said that, judging from the experience encountered in other destroyed towns, there were yet many unexploded mines in a number of the larger buildings which had not been completely ruined; among these were the Palais de Justice and the Hôtel de Ville.

Wires cunningly attached to charges of high explosives were common methods of killing those who, on entering buildings, might thoughtlessly come in contact with them. As a matter of fact, in a number of the more recently evacuated towns, some of the German prisoners who had been caught, being the men who were skilled in this barbarous practice, were assigned to the special work of freeing the ruins of such bombs and other explosives—a task no more hazardous than full of poetic justice.

After leaving St. Quentin, stopping to pay my respects to General Nollet, he recounted to me that in a chapel connected with the French château which had been the headquarters of the German General von Huttier—the château being blown up when he evacuated it—the private sepulchre of the family had been destroyed and the bones of the dead scattered about over the stone floors. I enclose herewith a photograph, which General Nollet gave to me, showing the effects of this sacrilegious act.

On the following day, *en route* to Soissons, I stopped at Longpont to see the ruins of the famous château owned by the Montesquiou family. Picturesquely located and connected with the noted ruin of the Abbey of Longpont, of the Twelfth Century, the château itself, judging from the appearance of the front still standing, must have been a magnificent structure. In its beauty of design it was considered one of the show places of that section of the country. To-day, it is a mass of ruins, and only a trace here and there in the interior remains to show its original state of elegance. In my telegram referred to, I

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have already described the looting which took place here by German officers of all the accumulated works of art and treasures of priceless value.

Incidentally, one must involuntarily ask the question: "How far shall such acts be considered—and they must find their counterpart in thousands of instances during the German occupation of French soil—in taking into account the amount of compensation that shall be exacted from these despoilers?" Only the highest-minded abnegation of all intent or desire for revenge, or even justice to its fullest limit, would seem to prevent that kind of reparation that would exact from such an enemy "like for like."

It has even been suggested that some of the finest works of art that Germany possesses should be surrendered to France —some of the finest to be found in the most famous museums in her cities—not alone as a symbol of defeat but as a small measure of compensation for the historic monuments and art treasures which have been so ruthlessly destroyed in so many cities in France.

A description of the destroyed city of Soissons, so long the outpost of the German entrenchments after the first victory of the Marne, would be but a repetition of that already given of the complete ruin and desolation which I saw at Noyon and St. Quentin. Here, as in the other places, the hand of the dynamiter had made sure that the most historic monuments should be levelled to earth, and so it was not surprising that the Cathedral—which must have been of stately proportions—was in its greater part reduced to ruins. Here, as in the other towns, I saw scarcely a building intact; indeed, none that had not been visited by shell, fire, or explosive bombs.

It was near this place, in one of the unmolested châteaux, which are a delight upon the landscape of France, that I lunched with General Mangin—one of the most capable of the French Generals of this war.

In passing, I should not omit to pay tribute to the uniform courtesy of all these French military officers to Americans who have been to the front. Their kindly hospitality is as marked as their bravery and genius in battle.

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While not within the province of the subject of this despatch to deal with the problem of restoration, yet a number of ingenious plans have been suggested for its accomplishment. Naturally, with the great loss to the man-power of France caused by the war, the question of labor is one of paramount importance. To supply this, not a few advocate the enforced retention on French soil for a number of years of many German prisoners of war for this work of reconstruction, as one of the penalties to be imposed upon a conquered foe.

Without passing upon its feasibility, the justice of a plan by which those who have destroyed must be compelled to restore would not be seriously questioned from an ethical point of view.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
WM. G. SHARP.

General Mangin, who invited us to lunch with him, is a genial man, very different from the picture sometimes given of him. Eighteen months before, at the time of his attack at the Chemin des Dames, where circumstances led the French to suffer very heavily, he had been nicknamed "mangeur d'hommes." His words at that time were famous: "As long as I have at my disposal a man and a gun, I will attack." The recent successes of his strategy had since made a hero of him, he was highly praised in the press and was well-loved by his troops, as indeed I was told he always had been. Rather short, with a black moustache, an intelligent face seamed with many lines, clear unblinking eyes, a large head and bull-dog jaw, his appearance could not fail to excite interest. He has held throughout that war is a matter of offensives, and he maintained this argument to me, saying:

"Making war means making offensives." He added: "For centuries past the problem has been the same, it is the fight between the armour and the shell, and since the shell is generally the stronger it is the better weapon."

His army alone in the past three months had captured 46,000 prisoners, all in the course of very hard and bitter

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fighting. He considered the Germans would soon be beaten but that they were not giving up easily, although it was a recognized fact that their morale had weakened.

Other subjects we discussed that day I will revert to when I come to the fast-approaching days of the Armistice.

On leaving General Mangin's hospitable door, I started immediately back to Paris with my son and Major Bloch-Laroque, while the other members of my party continued on the trip as originally planned to Rheims and Château-Thierry. But the possibility of some message from the President in regard to an armistice rendered it unadvisable for me to remain absent another hour from Paris, although I had kept in frequent telephonic conversation with the Embassy and knew that no message had yet arrived.

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CHAPTER XV

THE DAYS OF THE ARMISTICE

WHEN the historic news of the signing of the Armistice was received in Paris, on the morning of November 11, 1918, it was as if some long-imprisoned bird had been given freedom. Yet throughout the celebration, which was not marked by any disorderly scenes, there seemed to be a subdued feeling in spite of the universal joy of the people. This was caused by the memory of the tremendous loss in man-power and a realization of the cost of victory.

On the 28th day of September, 1918, Bulgaria had asked the Allied Governments for an armistice. It at once became clear to my own mind that the great war structure, which the Central Powers had built up under the masterly direction of Germany, was crumbling. The very geography of the situation, without regard to other factors, made this inevitable. With Bulgaria out of the war, Turkey became detached in a geographical sense from her allied associates. Dependent for assistance as she always had been upon them, and particularly upon Germany, she too would have to follow suit.

Indeed, as far back as the middle of September, M. Také Jonesco, the very prominent former President of the Council of Roumania, had predicted to me the weakening and final fall of Bulgaria.

I was so impressed with the judgment voiced by him, that I cabled an account of this incident in one of my reports to the State Department.

Telegrams from Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

Paris, *September* 21, 1918.

SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington.

What it is hoped may be a prophetic sign of the weakening of Bulgaria was voiced to me yesterday (September 20th) by

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M. Také Jonesco, formerly President of the Council of Roumania, who left his country less than three months ago. He told me that M. Pachitch, the Serbian statesman, now in Paris, had just received a telegram from a private source at Saloniki, which had not yet been made public. It said that the impression of a number of prisoners was that the demoralization of the Bulgarian troops was serious. M. Jonesco said that five years ago, when Bulgaria was pining for peace in her war with Turkey, one of her leading Generals had come to him and told him that the morale of the Bulgarian army was so low that they had positively refused to fight any longer and that peace must be secured to save his country. M. Jonesco felt that a similar situation might exist today in the Bulgarian army, as many of the troops must be the same as those who were engaged in the war but five years ago.

SHARP.

Paris, *September* 29, 1918.

SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington.

The news from Bulgaria transcends in importance in the public mind all other happenings during the past week. Within the hour, M. Vesnitch, my Serbian colleague, has telephoned me that news has just come to him of the unconditional surrender of Bulgaria with speedy evacuation of Serbia. The sign of this defection in its logical effect on the Turkish situation has caused unequalled exultation . . .

A curious reason for this sudden surrender of Bulgaria was given to me yesterday by M. Franklin-Bouillon, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies. He said that General Allenby's Palestine victories had hurried on Bulgaria to sue for peace before her old enemy Turkey could first do so.

Lord Derby told me at luncheon that he had heard through a private telegram that a great riot had broken out in Vienna, German troops being hurried there to take possession of the city . . .

I foresee the imminent fall of Cambrai and St. Quentin.

SHARP.

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The Russian Grand Duke Alexander expressed himself pessimistically, and to my thinking too much so, because of the immediate effects which the troubled situation already evident in Germany would have upon developments to be expected in Russia, with consequent reactions against the world at large. But in all justice, I should add that the Russian Ambassador in Paris, M. Maklakoff, appointed by Kerensky and consequently not on friendly terms with the Grand Duke, called on me about the middle of October to tell me similarly that the fall of the Imperial dynasty in Germany would, he feared, greatly strengthen and encourage the Bolsheviks among his people.

Yet the general sympathy of the world was by this time overwhelmingly turned against that dynasty. It was in October that M. Sulzer, the Swiss Minister at Washington, on his way through Paris returning from Switzerland to his post, spoke to me about the great effect which he believed the President's message would have, by appealing directly to the German people to separate them from the Emperor.

The feeling in military circles, about the middle of August, had been that another "peace offensive" from Germany was bound to come before the winter closed in, possibly some time in October; but it would be difficult to say how these propositions would be made and of what they might consist. It was noticeable that the French press did much talking at that time concerning these hypothetical conditions. The strongest sentiment expressed turned upon the restoration of Alsace and Lorraine. This question remained the banner around which statesmen rallied their followers. The general view I heard expressed was that the war would have to be continued if necessary for the sake of Alsace and Lorraine alone.

One particularly distinguished French army officer, with whom a member of my own staff had occasion to converse on August 22, made some remarks on which subsequent events cast an interesting light.

W. D. Memorandum of a Conversation.
Confidential. *August* 22, 1918.

B—— declared that as a result of the recent victories all shades of public opinion had been crystallized in two extreme

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forms. There were those who would have a peace imposed by force of arms, guaranteeing not only France's frontiers and the return of Alsace and Lorraine but also her economic future; and then there were those who were so weary of the war, and were so conscious of the sacrifices made, that they would want peace as soon as possible and would not be very particular as to the terms. The second party was, however, small as compared with the first; and it was bound to grow smaller as France's victory extended and she recovered more and more of her territory. The very ones who were now ready to accept whatever they could get would then be the loudest to cry for all sorts of concessions, reparations and guarantees. He added:

"There is no sign at present that Germany is prepared to make an equitable peace. For peace to be made while Russia remains in her present condition would mean that a new war would come in a few years. France could not face this. She has suffered too much. For her to attempt bearing a greater military burden in the future would mean her absolute death. America is generous, America does not want France to die. Therefore America can be trusted not to accept a peace which would kill us as a nation.

"The keystone of the question is Alsace and Lorraine. The French themselves will feel that they have got back something for their pains. The Germans will have acknowledged themselves beaten. The economic concessions we shall demand will be of greater importance, but they could be covered over with formulas so that the German people themselves might not realize that their Government has failed in all it undertook to do. For this reason, if for this reason only, we must have Alsace and Lorraine.

"As for the Left Bank of the Rhine, based on strategic considerations, that is a question which few people understand or stop to think about, so while it has its partisans they are not numerous and can scarcely be taken into account when dealing with public opinion and the feeling among soldiers. If the question of annexing more than Alsace and Lorraine is raised at all, it must be by the negotiators at the Peace Conference, and not by public opinion.

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"A serious discussion of peace before we have Germany completely beaten would be the greatest misfortune that could happen to the world. But I do not believe there is the slightest possibility of this. We are now in a position to make this the world's last war, if only we keep on. But if we stop prematurely in order to accept terms agreeable to Germany, whether sincere or not, since there cannot now be adequate guarantees behind them—then this will not be the last war. It can be, provided only we beat Germany before negotiating."

W. D.

I should here remark that uncertainty as to the immediate future prevailed in the best-informed circles of France, military as well as political,[1] while agreement was absolute on the single fact that subsequent to America's intervention, and particularly after the Second Battle of the Marne, eventual victory was assured.

As an example among many of the opinions expressed by highly competent persons in July and August when envisaging the months to follow, I would mention the views of Marshal Joffre as stated by him, and as further explained to me in person by his chief of cabinet, Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Fabry, both of which opinions I transmitted to the State Department.

W. D. Memorandum of a Conversation.

July 27, 1918.

Confidential.

Marshal Joffre said to me in substance:

"The Germans are still holding their fresh reserve divisions massed in the North, and they would be able to attempt an offensive against the English at any time, probably south of Arras and at Kemmel. Nevertheless, I have heard nothing definite to show that this offensive is imminent. It is probable that difficulties in means of communication are hampering the Germans. I should not be surprised if this same reason had

[1] "Few guessed how close that victory was (in the summer of 1918) but there was an instinctive crystallization of plans for the peace." Seymour-House, Vol. IV, Ch. I.

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prevented them from following up their advantages in their earlier offensives this year.

"The English have completely reorganized and re-formed their forces, they have done fine work in this respect, and they appear to be in good condition to resist a shock.

"I very much doubt whether any conclusive military result can now be obtained by either ourselves or our enemies this year. It looks as though we would both continue until the end of the season, scrapping at various points along the line and reverting to a war of exhaustion carried on more or less in the open, after the war of exhaustion waged in the trenches.

"Our losses on the Soissons—Château-Thierry Front, and along the Marne, have been exceedingly heavy for the past five or six days. On the first day of Mangin's offensive, we advanced eight or nine kilometers, losing scarcely a man. But the price must be paid afterwards in such affairs, and the Germans now have their batteries in position against us, and have brought up the reserves they need."

W. D.

Telegram from Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

Paris, *August* 10, 1918.

SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington.

Lieutenant-Colonel Fabry, who has been for a long time Aide-de-camp to Marshal Joffre, came into the Embassy this morning at my request, to tell me of the reasons which the Marshal had in mind when he mentioned to Mr. Dawson his opinion which I transmitted to the Department in my despatch of July 29th. They are two-fold:

First, the lack of effectives, owing to which the German Army finds itself very hard pressed for reserves and unable to make any more officers. The French counter-offensive between the Marne and the Aisne exhausted 70 to 72 divisions, which finally crossed the Vesle, greatly weakened in numbers and strength. It is known that the battalions of these divisions had far from their full complement of men. The Crown Prince of Bavaria, having sent a part of his reserves to the

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armies of the Crown Prince of Prussia, has at the present time only about 25 fresh divisions. The German class of 1920 will not be called into depôts until the 31st of this month, and it is very improbable that the Germans will immediately send this class to the front, as they are the last reinforcements which they may hope for this year. The demobilizing of still more of the German reserves is the result of the Franco-British attack in front of Amiens. Already ten or twelve German divisions of the armies of the Crown Prince of Bavaria have been used there, and it is probable that even more than the whole number of 25 will be needed. This in turn exhausts the reserves of the German armies in the North, where a big offensive might have been made.

The second reason is the bad morale prevailing among the German troops. After the great effort which has been demanded of them during the past three months by their chiefs, and with the promises of victory not realized, quite the contrary, their armies having been pushed back in many places, further effort cannot be obtained from them. The armies of the Crown Prince of Prussia will require from two to three months to recuperate. It might be that the lowest estimate possible would be a month and a half, provided the Allies remain inactive. However, the attack in front of Amiens shows that this is not the intention of the Allied chiefs.

The low morale of the German troops is clearly evident by the interrogation of prisoners and documents found on wounded and dead soldiers.

While it is true that the French armies are equally fatigued from the losses sustained and from the hardships that they have had to bear, yet they are spurred on by their victories. An army of 400,000 men which has lost 200,000 would not be worth anything in a retreat, but in an advance their enthusiasm carries them through.

The Colonel added that it was the opinion of the Marshal that the recent Allied victories could not have been achieved so easily, notwithstanding the ability and wise decision of Marshal Foch, and the great courage of the Allied troops, had it not been for a great weakening among the Germans. That is the

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chief explanation of the relative facility with which advances are now made by the Allies.

These two reasons have made Marshal Joffre believe that an offensive on a great scale could hardly be again attempted by the Germans this year. Of course if they are hard pressed they might possibly risk launching another big offensive as a last resource. If this should take place, the Germans would have even less chance of success than they have had up to the present time because the forces of the Allies, due to the arrival of the Americans, are constantly on the increase. Furthermore, the morale of the Allied troops is excellent.

The Colonel said that of course some local offensive might be made by the Germans at some given point along the line.

SHARP.

Early in the month of October, I found events were happening in such swift succession that contrary to my habit I jotted down a few day-to-day notes about occurrences. I was prevented from continuing, through the constant pressure of my work, with callers coming in ever-increasing numbers, my many visits, official and otherwise, to be made, and the steady flow of telegrams to be addressed to the Department in addition to written despatches (though the importance of writing as compared with cabling became less and less in such strenuous times). Yet it may be of interest to give here just a few lines as recorded by me:

Ambassador Sharp's "Daily Reminder"

Wednesday, October 2, 1918. Saw M. Trumbitch, member of Austrian Parliament,[1] Yugoslav, who berated treaty of London (May, 1917), giving to Italy the east coast Adriatic, Albania, etc. Wanted United States to land troops, promising uprising of his people against Austria in such event. He worked all night on report to leave with me. Prince of Monaco dined with us, spending three hours in most interesting talk discussing Emperor William, Crown Prince, possible antagonism of Bavarian Catholics to Prussian Government. Spoke of

[1] Dr. Trumbitch was President of the Dalmatian Diet in 1917.

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Emperor William's aversion to Hague Conventions; also of Empress's dislike of French; gave chocolate from Paris to her servants; he thought her a good mother, but not brilliant. Always played the part. Crown Prince weak. He told interesting story of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria visiting Monte Carlo with uniformed staff, his vanity, etc.

October 3. Secretary Baker called this A.M. Will leave for America tomorrow noon. General discussion over outlook. Agreed with me that not necessary to march into Berlin in order to win a lasting victory, but be masters and dictate terms.[1] Indemnities, of course.

Friday, October 4. Count Zarnowski of Polish Commission called to discuss Polish questions, leaving memo. for transmission to Department. He told me an interesting story of Emperor Charles of Austria and a Minister of Railroads in Russia. Minister was asked by the Emperor how long it had taken him to rise from a station-master to his present position.[2]

[1] Marshal Haig justified his policy in accepting the Armistice rather than carry the war into Germany by saying notably in two of his official despatches: "The strategic plan of the Allies had been realized with a completeness rarely seen in war. When the Armistice was signed by the enemy his defensive powers had already been definitely destroyed. A continuance of hostilities could only have meant disaster to the German Armies and the armed invasion of Germany." (Despatch dated December 21, 1918.) "Had our advance been conducted against active opposition, even from a beaten and demoralized enemy, our progress must have been greatly delayed. The difficulties of supply would have been enormously increased in many ways, among which would have been the necessity of bringing forward large quantities of ammunition. Bridges, railways and roads would have been destroyed in front of us, or blown up after we had passed by delay-action mines. Immense loss would have been caused to property of all descriptions and incalculable suffering inflicted upon the inhabitants of the invaded districts of Belgium, France and Luxembourg." (Despatch dated March 21, 1919.) See Boraston, pages 298 and 316 respectively.

[2] "The Empire was governed neither by financiers, nor by business men, nor by lawyers, nor by doctors. It was governed, according to the expression of Tsar Nicholas I, by 'forty thousand chiefs of bureau,' the *Chinovniks*. To secure a position and to attain the high posts in the State, one had to follow the prescribed order of promotion, and a fortune of millions gave no additional claim. The upper *bourgeoisie* considered that its interests suffered from such a situation, it aspired to play the preponderant part which it

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Thought Emperor was not strong with his people. Empress not at all liked. A million Austrian soldiers deserters.

October 5, *Saturday*. Luncheon with Capt. Jackson at Interallié Club. Late in the afternoon learned of Central Powers' peace proposal. In the evening attended dinner to Vesnitch, Serbian Minister, at Cercle Volney. Minister Leygues spoke, also self, briefly.

Sunday, October 6. Went out to James Hazen Hyde's at Versailles for luncheon, George with me. Day very beautiful as we returned. News of enemy proposals for peace creating great interest and secret rejoicing as I believe.

Monday, October 7. George, Mr. Dawson, and I went out to St. Quentin with Military officers.[1]

. . . . . .

Wednesday, October 9th. President Wilson's reply to Germany's note published. Everybody pleased as it was at once seen that the Germans had their powder burned by the questions proposed by the President. No political capital for home consumption left to them; the answer awaited with much interest. In the evening attended dinner at Cercle Interallié. Mr. Vanderbilt given Medal Legion of Honor by French Government. A number spoke, among them Viviani. The dinner was to American "Escadrille Lafayette."

Concerning the prospects of Peace, I advised the Department as follows:

Telegram from Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

Paris, *October* 8, 1918.

SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington.

In a talk with M. Pichon at the Foreign Office this evening he said that the representatives of the Allied Powers, now

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enjoyed in Europe. Goutchkoff (a draper), Terestchenko (a refiner), Konovaloff (an industrialist), considered themselves better fitted to hold a portfolio than functionaries of career." Jean Jacoby, *Comment fut préparé l'écroulement de la Russie, La Revue de France,* February 1, 1930.

[1] This was the trip described fully by Ambassador Sharp in Chapter XIV, for which reason the details he gave here are omitted.

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holding conference at Versailles, were awaiting with much interest the answer of President Wilson to the peace note of the Central Powers. He said that having full confidence in the President's answer the Allies would offer no suggestions. Speaking for France he said that he was sure the reply would meet with full approval. However, I found him very cautious when it came to saying what France would wish to have stipulated. The French press is likewise vague in setting out or advocating any definite course of action. All unite in stating that there should be demanded the fullest reparation backed by the strongest kind of guarantees before any discussion. As fairly indicating the general tone of such comments the noted political writer and Deputy Maurice Barrès writing in *L'Echo de Paris* this morning says, " France, Belgium and the other free nations have by fifty months of trials and sacrifices without limit merited the integral reparation of their damages of yesterday and today and the guarantee of their security in the future." A well-known military critic writing in *Le Petit Journal*, formerly M. Pichon's paper, is a little more definite as to the purposes to be obtained, in giving expression to the following comment: " There is no doubt but that our High Command, whom the affair concerns, would demand as a fundamental condition of the armistice the evacuation not only of our Departments, of Belgium, and of Luxembourg, but also of Alsace and Lorraine, which we would ourselves occupy. Then, yes, we would commence to talk."

Apropos of first imposing the condition of evacuation and as bearing upon the last paragraph of my No. —— of yesterday, I should add that in a conversation today with General Mangin, one of the most noted French army officers, he said to me that from a military standpoint the German armies might be secretly glad of the opportunity to evacuate the invaded territory free and unmolested in the process, as their armies would be left intact to fight again on German soil if necessary; that as a matter of fact the German commanders were endeavoring to retreat to their frontier with as little loss as possible, and that in his opinion it lies in the power of the Allied forces to destroy the enemy's armies before they could

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reach the frontier. He was opposed to allowing them to evacuate unless they left on French soil all their arms and munitions.

Whatever may be the real opinion of the public mind upon the question of at all considering an armistice, it is certain that the French press, notwithstanding its hostile comments, does not go to the lengths which the American papers have gone in unconditional opposition to it, quotations from which appear today in all the French papers. However, the reading of ill-timed boasts and threats of the German papers in case of rejection has put the public in no patient frame of mind in considering it.

Yesterday a deputation from the National Socialist Congress which had been in session in Paris called to inform me that they would tomorrow leave with me a copy of the resolutions adopted by the Congress concerning the peace offer of the Central Powers. They at the same time stated that M. Pichon had promised to forward to the President a copy of these resolutions which however have appeared in all the papers of yesterday. The resolutions express high appreciation of the President's attitude upon the question of peace and profess to see in the present proposition of the enemy Powers an earnest effort to bring about peace, the overture for which they hope will not be hastily repulsed by the Allied Powers without discussion. Satisfaction at the same time is expressed in the change of attitude of Germany, which finally recognizes that the subject of Alsace and Lorraine is one of international law.

Yesterday General Debeney commanding the French Army in the St. Quentin sector said to me that an early answer to the proposal of the Central Powers was desirable on account of the effect a delay might have on the fighting morale of the Allied troops. This I learned tonight is also the view of another French General with headquarters at Rheims.

SHARP.

In dealing with the subject of "France Devastated" I mentioned my conversation with General Mangin at his headquarters near Soissons, saying I would revert to it when I came

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to the Days of the Armistice. It was noteworthy that this famous General, while admitting the possibility of peace in the near future, still reckoned as late as October 8 with the chances of a prolonged war, giving his attention particularly to this military aspect of the situation.

Speaking first of our share in the war, General Mangin said that America not only should have but did have a right to an autonomous army of her own, but it would be well also to have some of our troops serve with the French so as to profit by the French staffs and officer-organization as they existed in a state of high perfection among the French, whereas our own staffs were, he remarked, still inexperienced. He, like General Debeney, urged the sending of great quantities of material, especially aeroplanes.

In regard to the military situation and the possibilities of an armistice, General Mangin next said that it might serve Germany's interests, as she was now in the bad situation of being confronted with heavy losses if a general retreat were to become necessary. He explained that Germany disposed of about 200 divisions, in addition to her new 1920 class, about 500,000 men; and some 400,000, wounded in the Spring fighting, who would soon again be fit for action; in all about 3,000,000 men. If left unmolested, they might attack in the Spring of 1919, and according to his theory of war it was what they should do. He considered that another German offensive if attempted immediately would be deplorable. He mentioned incidentally that according to information he had received the Germans were preparing a defensive line behind Laon and possibly another before the Meuse.

W. D. Memoranda of Conversations.

October 12, 1918.

Confidential.

Conversing at his Headquarters, on October 8th, General Mangin, in command of the French Tenth Army (Soissons Sector) said in my presence:

"There are several ways in which America could help us even more than she is doing.

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"First of all we need men. The autonomous American army was necessary, for the sake of America's prestige and also for the morale of the Allies and for the depression of Germany. But you have over here at the present moment far more men than you can possibly manage with your existing officer organisation, and this will continue to be true as your army develops. Company officers can be formed in a relatively short time, as you have brilliantly proved, and you have many fine Field officers also, but you have not a sufficient number of the latter and you cannot turn them out quickly and in large numbers. Why not, then, allow us to use in our divisions the men whom you are unable to utilize in your autonomous army? I was for a time in command of three American Divisions, and saw for myself how fine they are; but they were taken away almost immediately for service on an American Front; and all the hundreds of thousands of Americans not needed for that service remained unused at the rear while we were short of men for our great offensive.[1] I may go so far as to say that but for this policy the war could have been ended this year. And unless it is altered so that one division in every three in the French army is composed of Americans, we shall be compelled to reduce our divisions next year.

"But we do not need only men from America. We need material for our own use, besides that sent for the use of the American army itself. In the way of material, we need principally shells. Great as is the output of our factories, it does not quite suffice. Then we need horses; one of the reasons for which we are now short of horses is because we had to supply the American army with them at the start. Many of those horses had originally come from the United States; but we gave them up again; and now they are needed by us. Furthermore, we are short of motor transports, also

[1] It became generally known only later that General Pershing's policy had consisted from the start in breaking through the trenches and ending the war as promptly as possible, on the principles of General Grant's strategy. Hence the hikes to which he had his men trained, the proportionately large numbers he held in reserve, and other measures for which he was sometimes criticized.

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partly for the reason that for a while we supplied the American army with them. A distribution of tonnage enabling you to bring us these three things in large quantities, without stopping the transportation of men, would be of the very greatest value to us. As for aeroplanes, I believe in them for bombing and observing, and also for the moral effect; but not for real military results, where only armies can do the work.

"The whole of war is a question of a projectile and an armor-plate; however strong the armor, you will always find a projectile which will pierce it in time. Therefore I believe in the offensive method, and in continual hammering. I could now take Laon within three days[1] if ordered to do it. But the difficulty is in getting the order. I had the same trouble about my July offensive, which was easy to execute once I secured the order, but for a long while I could not get the permission to attack.

"We now have all the crops in this region, they were harvested not by the Germans but by our troops, because we attacked and drove the enemy out, instead of allowing him to organize a retreat, to destroy or remove crops, or even to save his material. My army alone captured 900 cannon, more than 1,000,000 shells of various calibers, and ambulances and hospital supplies to the value of more than a million francs.

"The Germans may now be prepared to evacuate all of invaded France and Belgium in order to save their soldiers and lay waste the country behind them. But it would be a mistake to overlook the fact that they are resisting stubbornly on their positions, and that the soldiers we see and the prisoners we take are fine physical specimens of men. You have only to look at the prisoners working all round here, to judge for yourself. I estimate Germany will have in all something under a million men to add to the rough 3,000,000 already on the Western Front. I do not believe that the Austrian Germans will consent to be incorporated, as Germany hopes, against us

[1] At this point General Mangin had gone up before a large map stretched across the wall, when Ambassador Sharp told me to ask him if he thought the French could recapture Laon, and how long it would take them to do it. This conversation was held on October 8, and the order must have been given within 48 hours, since the French re-entered Laon October 13.—W. D.

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on this front; so that Germany's armies opposed to us next year will not exceed 4,000,000.

"Her only remaining hope to win the war lies in trying to divide the Allies. That was the object of her peace move. She hoped to make use of President Wilson, but she is dealing with a man of character. She is paying the price now for her mistake in not allowing Hindenburg to carry out his plans. I hold on reliable authority that Hindenburg wanted to attack in the North with a view to taking Calais,[1] where he might have succeeded, but the Crown Prince insisted upon an attempt against Paris, which Hindenburg declared to be entirely too ambitious. Rather than assume such a responsibility, Hindenburg turned over his command to Ludendorff, who obeyed the Crown Prince with the results we all know."

I have since asked Marshal Joffre's opinion as to General Mangin's suggestions concerning America's aid. The Marshal said:

"We certainly need horses and motor-trucks from America for the use of our army, but I do not agree that we need ammunition. Our own factories can more than supply our demands.

"As for utilizing American soldiers under French officers in French divisions, I think Mangin makes a mistake in psychology. Not only must America have her own autonomous army, for the reasons he states, but all American soldiers should serve under American officers because they will do their best work under American officers. There should, however, be a number of French officers as advisers with each American army, and even with each American division, the American officers retaining active command of the men. And then, America must have the courage to eliminate ruthlessly all officers whose work proves them not to be good. This is a lesson we have had to learn, as every country must learn it in time of war; and the sooner it is learned, the better for the army and the nation. Of the 100,000 officers, roughly

[1] The possibility of the fall of Calais had been discussed with me by Marshal Joffre at the end of April. See Memorandum dated April 29, 1918, Chapter XIII.—W. D.

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speaking, America has formed so far, most are entirely fitted for their duties, Field officers as well as subordinates."

W. D.

Following shortly after Bulgaria's formal request for an armistice, rumours became rife in Paris that Austria had served notice on Germany that a similar action would be taken by her alone, unless a joint effort could be addressed to the Allied Powers in view of a general armistice. While not much credence was placed as a rule in such rumours, yet for once they appeared to have a real foundation. Subsequent developments proved that some such representations had certainly been made.

If events had in a way cast before them the shadow of what was impending, the opening of negotiations for an armistice begun by Germany,[1] and so adroitly answered by President Wilson, left no room for doubt of an early cessation of the war. If President Wilson had heretofore exhibited a matchless power of expressing the vital issues at stake and of appealing to the people of the world in support of them, it remained for him, now that the fruit of that necessary effort had been realized, to outmatch the greatest minds of Germany in such a manner as to render the morale of her armies impotent for further struggle. With a complete frankness and withal a remarkable adroitness in shaping the course of discussion following Germany's appeal for an armistice, he won recognition for one of the greatest principles for which he had contended—that of the expression of the voice of the German

[1] "To ask for an armistice is one thing, to obtain it is another. The new Chancellor—Prince Max of Baden—sent his Note to President Wilson on the 5th (of October). He based himself on the 'Fourteen Points,' which in the name of Germany he accepted. The President replied on the 8th, asking questions and demanding a German withdrawal from invaded territory as a guarantee of good faith. On the 12th Germany and Austria declared themselves willing to evacuate all invaded territory as a preliminary to an armistice. On the 14th the President indicated that there could be no negotiation with the Emperor. As for an armistice, the conditions must be left to the Commanders in the field, but absolute safeguards must be provided for the maintenance of 'the present military supremacy of the armies of the United States and of the Allies in the field.'" Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 1916–18, Part II, Chapter XXIII.

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people rather than of the oligarchy which had misrepresented them. But he did more than this; by his insistence he forced those who spoke for Germany to reveal her intense desire for a cessation of hostilities and a substantial agreement to conditions, some of which were afterwards in principle embodied in the terms of the armistice.[1]

By these negotiations, even though something might intervene to prevent their immediate consummation, the morale of the German army had suffered irreparable loss of prestige. The loss was not even as great in the eyes of the world as it was in their own ranks. The hope which animated those ranks for an early peace would not be baulked. Their leaders dared not so do. The thought that the morrow would mark a cessation of hostilities could not but bring with it a lack of the fighting spirit which had characterized the remarkable charges in the great advance of German troops. Men who had borne the brunt of battle for many months on the danger line would not to-day willingly offer themselves as a sacrifice for a cause which to-morrow would be surrendered. The logic of the situation, so clearly exposed by President Wilson, left those in authority in Germany to pursue no other course than that which followed—to agree to the terms of an armistice imposed by Marshal Foch.

I myself had become convinced that the war was fast nearing

[1] "The German Note of October 12 was concerted with the Austro-Hungarian Government, whom President Wilson had not yet honoured with a special answer. It did not suffice for the satisfaction of the President of the United States. His Secretary of State, Lansing, replied on October 14 to the German Note of the 12th, informing Berlin that the evacuation of the occupied territories was a question to be settled by the High Command of the Allied Armies so as to assure their complete and absolute military supremacy; that all destruction must cease, that submarine warfare must be stopped, and that the absolutist régime under which Germany lived must be abolished. These summons were received with consternation in Berlin. They dealt a severe blow to the hope that through President Wilson's intervention they might escape the consequences of defeat. The American Note of October 18 to Vienna had a similar effect. The only hope which remained for averting disaster consisted in withdrawing the armies from battle." *The Peace of the Central Empires*, 1917–1918. Anonymous. *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 15, 1929.

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its end. I had lost no time in studying the question of the armistice conditions which might be acceptable, for the dual purpose of putting the promptest possible cessation to this prolonged slaughter of the world's best young manhood, and of assuring a peaceful future safeguarded against further unprovoked onslaughts of militaristic imperialism.

I think I can say that there was no man of distinction on the Allied side, with whom I could possibly get in touch, whose views I did not endeavour to sound at that period which was of supreme importance to the world.

The ultimate aims as well as the immediate viewpoint of the American Government were of course well known to me, from my constant contact not only with the President and Colonel House and the Secretary of State, but with Secretary Baker and Secretary Daniels, and with the wise and distinguished Generals and Admirals in whose hands the fortunes of our arms were placed.

With General John J. Pershing in particular I had enjoyed the friendliest relations, there being between us an unfailing sympathy in our exchanges of opinions upon matters concerning the war.

I had, from the very outset, been inspired by the natural desire to place the services of the Paris Embassy at his disposal in every helpful way. But I found furthermore that I greatly enjoyed meeting him on numerous occasions during the prosecution of the war which called for a free, frank, and cordial collaboration between us, characterized by a complete mutuality of good sentiments. Nothing that I could possibly have done for him would have been more than his due. The great victory of St. Mihiel in September, 1918, had scarcely been needed to show to every American the value of Pershing's valiant army, although the news came as a veritable inspiration, and Americans, in common with their Allied brothers, rejoiced in this achievement. We could not but experience great satisfaction that our brave boys should so signally have contributed their help to the final task of ridding French soil of the invader. Then the closing weeks of the war followed swiftly, cast in a heroic mould and measuring the joint victories of the magnifi-

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cent French, British, and American soldiers, presaging the prompt defeat of the enemy.

By that time, the value of Pershing's men had come to be indelibly impressed upon all the people of Europe. Surpassing everything known in the history of previous wars, it made one more proud than ever to be American. The people of France in particular, having ample opportunity both to admire and to love America, came to have the highest regard for our boys as soldiers and as men, and for the gallant Chief, who, having at heart the best interests of the country he so ably served and of the valiant men under his command, put himself and his Army at the disposal of the French in their hour of utmost tragic need while ever safeguarding the sacred liberty of America's Army under the American flag.[1]

General Tasker H. Bliss, our eminent Military Representative on the Supreme War Council and eventually a Member of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, was also repeatedly in conference with me and would invariably leave with me the feeling of the accord which reigned between us. Too high a tribute could not be paid to his wisdom in counsel. He would come preferably to my residence at some hour chosen by himself because he knew I would be at home. It was understood between us that my other occupations would immediately cease and I would be at his absolute disposal for the time required, occasionally a matter of hours. Similarly with General Peyton C. March, our Chief of Staff, who had had the distinction of being the American Military Attaché with the Japanese Army during the Russo-Japanese War, I had frequent conferences, recognizing in him an officer possessed with the supreme genius of a born organizer. Then there was General Bullard, the great Commander of the glorious First Division of the A.E.F. in its operations against the Germans from December, 1917, to October, 1918; Brigadier-General W. W. Harts, the Chief of our Mission to the British General Headquarters and later in command of the American District in Paris; Colonel Cabot Ward, who conducted with such remarkable success the services of the American

[1] March 26, 1918.

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Intelligence Section at the rear with headquarters in Paris; and many others whom I had the occasion to sound, deriving benefit from their views and retaining the conviction that no opinion of my own had been expressed in vain.

In Navy circles my talks were principally with Admiral W. S. Sims, the President of the Naval War College who commanded the American Naval operations in European Waters from April, 1917, to the end of the war; Admiral H. T. Mayo, who as Commander-in-Chief of the American Atlantic Fleet in 1914 had demanded the salute of 21 guns to the United States flag from the Mexican Commander at Tampico, in amends for the arrest of a Navy paymaster, and who was Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet during the entire period of the war; Admiral W. S. Benson, who had been a member of the Commission appointed to confer with the Allied Powers in Europe in 1917 and had returned as a Member of the Special Mission Abroad in October, 1918; and Rear-Admiral Andrew T. Long, for a time my Naval Attaché in Paris and American Staff Representative there in 1918.

But these talks, in the weeks preceding the Armistice, were not limited to Army and Navy officers, nor indeed to my own fellow-countrymen. Among my American diplomatic colleagues whom I had occasion to see I would mention particularly my good friends Mr. Thomas Nelson Page, American Ambassador in Rome, and Mr. Joseph E. Willard, the Ambassador in Madrid, the latter notably being a frequent visitor in Paris and both being always highly welcome guests at my house; not very long before, there had been Ambassador A. I. Elkus, returning from Turkey; and there was also Mr. John W. Davis, selected by the President for the London Embassy to succeed Mr. Walter H. Page, with whom I had exchanged a number of letters. There were also my colleagues among American Ministers passing through Paris and my foreign colleagues of the Diplomatic Corps, most of whom I have already had occasion to mention by name; and in addition to scores of distinguished Frenchmen in all prominent callings of life there were such Englishmen of note as Arthur Balfour, Lloyd George, and Lord Northcliffe.

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Among the inquiries I made, one was of Marshal Joffre, asking for a free expression of his views, as I knew that he was a man of great forethought. As Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies he had elaborated his own plan for an armistice, so as not to risk being taken by surprise after the victory on which he counted eventually. Furthermore he had had a care to remain in constant touch with later developments of the war, so that his counsel was always highly valuable.

I may mention here that at various times, when examining reports handed in to me on opinions expressed by him at my desire, I was constantly impressed by the scope of the information he would either have at his command or could secure for me at brief notice. This sometimes included even economic questions of a sort excluded from all former conceptions of strategy, but now imposed by the force of circumstances upon the high commanding officers in the course of the World War. The great army organizations which had become necessary could not do their work at the front unless supported at the rear by a complete and gigantic system, covering transportation as well as fabrication and all the multiple resources of a practical economic and financial nature demanded thereby.

W. D. Memoranda of Conversations with Marshal Joffre.

October 12, 1918.

Marshal Joffre said to me:

"I consider that we are very near the end of the war. Germany is at the point of collapse, and it may come at any moment. Her Government is shaken, and her people have suffered greatly. Not only the Government, but the people themselves realize the full gravity of their position to-day. Furthermore, Turkey and Austria are about to withdraw from the war, and without them Germany is helpless.

"President Wilson's reply to the German Note was exactly what it should be, saying that evacuation must come first. Only, it would be a grave mistake on the part of the Allies to let Germany know that they consider her resistance at an end. We should continue all precautions as if the war were going on indefinitely; we must force her to feel that she

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is beaten and lies in our hand. Then her collapse will be complete and she will have to accept all our conditions."

I asked the Marshal whether by the expression "all our conditions" he meant not only evacuation of all occupied territory in Europe and indemnities for damages done, but also the giving up of Germany's colonies, upon which condition I understood that both England and Japan were prepared to insist although France and America might care less.

After a long silence, the Marshal said:

"That question is a grave one. There is also that of the mastery of the seas. We must hope that Germany's collapse will be so complete that she will have to comply with whatever we demand."

Conditions to be Proposed for the Armistice

(As sketched out and communicated to me by Marshal Joffre at the request of the Ambassador, October 12, 1918.)

I. *Prior to any Discussion.*

(*a*) The establishment of a government responsible before the German people and being alone qualified to discuss either war or peace.

(*b*) The evacuation of territories and withdrawal to a line to be determined by the military command.

(*c*) Prohibition of creating any new military organization in a zone to be determined.

(*d*) Cession or immobilization of material and munitions (both Army and Navy).[1]

[1] The conditions finally brought forward by General Tasker H. Bliss as the American terms for the Armistice were equally drastic. André Tardieu has narrated in *La Paix*, Chapter II, Divisions III and IV, why and how these terms were eventually softened upon the representations of the European Allied commanders that milder terms would stand a better chance to be accepted by Germany, while sufficing from the military point of view. The American delegates agreed only after being given the assurance that the stern exigencies of President Wilson's Notes would thereby get full satisfaction. Interesting details have been given by General Mordacq, who was M. Georges Clemenceau's Military Chief of Cabinet at the time. See his work *La Vérité sur l'Armistice.*

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II. *Points whose Advisability might be Considered.*

(*a*) Manner of applying those points of the Wilson Programme which are immediately applicable.

(*b*) The re-victualling of civilian populations in Germany (food and raw materials).

(*c*) The fate of interned ships in neutral ports (they must be kept there).

III. *Inspection of the Conditions for the Armistice.*

Superintendence of the bridges over the Rhine and of railroads by an Inter-Allied Commission.

Commenting upon the "Conditions to be proposed for the Armistice" which he had prepared in writing, Marshal Joffre elucidated certain points for me as follows:

"The first group of points, 'Prior to any Discussion,' I consider absolutely necessary as safeguards in the application of an armistice. The second group might be considered as possibly advisable. The third is an essential condition for the fulfilment of the conditions to be applied.

(*a*) "In Group One, by a 'responsible Government' I mean a body directly empowered or appointed by the German people to speak for them. This body might be either the existing Reichstag or a specially elected Parliament. The former would probably be the better, since it is already constituted; but it would have to speak independently of all autocratic Hohenzollern influence, that is, the Emperor, the Crown Prince and Eitel must be excluded, and it would have to be specially authorized by the German people to treat in their name for peace or for war. The alternative of a specially elected body would manifestly be difficult to arrange and would mean a considerable delay.

(*b*) "As for the evacuation of territories and the line to be observed, the opinion of the military command is necessary and nothing should be done before this opinion has been given.

(*c*) "While all new works in the way of military organization must be prohibited, existing works, trenches, dug-outs, etc., may be allowed to remain.

(*d*) "The next point (*d*) is particularly delicate while being

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of vital importance. We cannot allow the enemy to remove all his guns and munitions and keep them as a threat against us. At the same time he may raise a similar objection against leaving them in our hands. The solution would be the destruction of his guns and material. The question of the German Navy is even more delicate and equally important. As long as his warships are in the Kiel Canal and his submarines at their bases, we must absolutely be protected against his enterprises by sea as well as by land.

"In Group Two, I suggest a study of points in the Wilson Programme which may be immediately applicable. I am in hearty accord with the Wilson Principles, and think it would be well for a commission to examine them carefully, and as soon as possible.

"As for supplying food and raw materials to the German people during the armistice, this might be the strongest card in the hand of the Allies, should the German Governmental body attempt obstruction against our peace conditions. The German people are suffering physically from food shortage, and while not pitying them for their deserved condition, I know that they will be grateful to those who feed them.

"The study of the interned ships question in neutral ports will probably be necessary also.

"The question of demanding hostages might be raised, but I consider that this would be a mistake. It would be vexatious, it would be lacking in the nobility which has characterized all of President Wilson's decisions so far, and it might risk causing the failure of the peace negotiations.

"Group Three, finally, lays down an essential condition, the superintendence of German railroads and Rhine bridges by the Allies so that the Germans may not mobilize or re-group their armed forces in any way whatsoever or at any point of their territory during the armistice."

W. D.

October 13th, 1918.

This afternoon, Marshal Joffre dictated to me, at the Ambassador's request, the following statement of his opinion

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for President Wilson, asking only that it be treated confidentially, since he did not wish to appear as doing more than give his personal views to the President in whose wisdom, sound judgment, and loyalty he reposes utmost confidence:

"I believe that everyone has had enough of war, for all have suffered heavily. In consequence, it will be a boon for humanity to stop the war. But there must be guarantees so that it may be not only the end of this war but the end of wars for decades and decades to come. We can attain this result only by being very strict in our demands.

"Germany is, I think, reduced to extremity, but her desire for an armistice may be only a ruse of war. In this case, her bad faith would become evident during a respite of one or two months allowing her to reconstitute her strength. But we ourselves could do much more than she during this time. Therefore the situation would not be to her advantage. There may be people in Germany who have such hopes from the armistice. But there are certainly others who know better. Germany is not a unit, there are divergences of opinion within her borders as elsewhere.

"The armistice will be long, several months or perhaps more. I doubt if peace can come for a year yet, and the armistice should not end entirely until peace is signed. The armistice might be a matter of intervals, renewed and running one into the other. The first might be for one month, after which our military precautions and effort might be reduced, if Germany's good faith were then established. That month will enable us to know.

"Certain Governments of the Entente have not yet decided upon all the measures which must be taken with a view to the armistice and to peace.

"Although Germany as a whole desires peace, and we desire peace, yet we have the upper hand, thanks especially to America, and we must have a logical and rational peace. Above all, we must suppress the German Governmental system. It has already been done away with in other directions, even in Austria, and in Germany itself many small States would be happy to detach themselves from Prussia. I entirely agree

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with President Wilson that this present system must disappear, or it will be a permanent menace to peace."

W. D.

October 30th, 1918.

Marshal Joffre said to me to-day:

"Austria-Hungary should be dealt with for an armistice as soon as possible, and separately if Germany also does not immediately ask to treat under conditions entirely acceptable to the Entente. Such a decision may come from Germany at any moment; but we cannot yet be sure of her sincerity when saying she accepts Mr. Wilson's principles. She is certainly not sincere in alleging that she now has a government qualified to negotiate on the lines laid down by Mr. Wilson.

"We may consider Austria as being out of the fight. By this, Germany's fate, which had been precipitated and rendered inevitable when Bulgaria withdrew from the war after America had entered it, becomes more imminent than ever. Austria's defection is not only a serious blow to Germany. An armistice, compelling Austria to accept conditions similar to those imposed upon Bulgaria, would open her railways to the Allies who, within a few weeks, could attack on the southern Bavarian frontier, where Germany has no defences and has not even any divisions.

"On the other hand, Germany has continued fortifying her original pre-war frontier and the line along the Rhine, while present negotiations have been in progress. Definite information to this effect has been received. We can only conclude that Germany is preparing to defend her soil, should certain eventualities occur.

"Germany is reduced very low indeed. She cannot increase her effective forces, she has lost much of her artillery and material, her population has suffered severely, and her morale is bad generally. But up to the present, it is the German nation which has been beaten rather than the army—an immense result attained, but one imposing circumspection militarily. The army is now fighting stubbornly on the positions it holds; the Allies meet with organized resistance

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wherever they launch an attack. This shows that the German army is still far from collapsing, though it is badly shaken and the nation behind it is shaken still more deeply. One reason for this is that the people have long lacked food whereas the army has had food.

"The next move for an armistice or for peace must, of course, come from Germany. We cannot make overtures of any sort. But if we can possibly secure a safe peace swiftly, whether by dealing with both Germany and Austria or by beginning with Austria alone, we should not miss the opportunity, and we should be quick about it.

"Our army is impregnated with the idea that the war is virtually over. There has been so much peace talk that officers and men can almost fancy themselves at home once more. If Germany could manage to hold out for a while longer, our armies, forced to a winter campaign which they now judge impossible, would feel a disappointment whose results might be extremely serious. The French army has accomplished such prodigies of valor and of self-sacrifice during more than four years, that I do not like to think it would refuse to fight on until Spring if ordered to do so. But such a possibility does exist, owing to the spirit of peace now impregnating the air, and to the fact that the French people themselves have suffered almost as much as they are capable of suffering. The English think they have suffered as much as we, but they have not. It is consequently our duty to secure peace as soon as we can, provided it be a sound peace.

"I find nothing to add, from a military point of view, to the armistice conditions for Germany which I suggested on October 12th; nor do I think any of those conditions should be omitted. But I think that, in view of developments in Austria, the armistice should now be more than purely military; it ought to foreshadow peace. There should be at least a clause stating that it is to prepare a sound peace for the future. The Wilson Propositions should be included in it, or at least those of the propositions which are immediately applicable.

"Events are showing more and more that President Wilson

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is right, and that his Fourteen Points are necessary for the world. I do not know the attitude of our Government towards them. Indeed, I have never heard of M. Clemenceau's having expressed his real opinion of them. I sometimes doubt whether he has considered them sufficiently to form any clear opinion. Therefore it is not possible to say what sort of peace he wants—even if he himself yet knows. He is a man of impulse, his policy consists in hitting out, and it is never possible to say in advance where or how he will be prompted to hit at the last moment.

"I think it would be a very grave mistake for us to demand the annexation of the Left Bank of the Rhine. It is not likely that the population there would care to come to us, at least for the present; and such a move on our part, contrary to the will of the people, would be denying not only Wilsonism but our own history for the past fifty years. At the same time, it is undeniable that the Rhine lying between Germany and ourselves would afford the safest of frontiers for the future.

"Two years ago, when I was still Commander-in-Chief, and when general conditions were different, I mapped out the broad lines for possible peace. One suggestion I made was that the territory on the Left Bank of the Rhine should be neutralized as a buffer state for a certain number of years, after which it would be given the choice, by popular vote, between French and German nationality. After some years, the people would not only know their will but would feel free to express it. A plebiscite now would be manifestly impossible.

"The future of both Germany and Austria, especially Austria, is difficult to foresee because of the complexities already existing and promising to increase. It is almost a pity that Austria should break up so soon and so completely. Various parts of her territory will apparently join on to neighbouring states, with the Czechoslovaks perhaps remaining independent in their midst. This creates a very dangerous situation. German Austria may very possibly join Bavaria, which would then become the dominating factor in the Germanic Confederation. The two big influences in the Germany

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of to-day are Prussia and Bavaria. The latter is the more liberal of the two, and is more in keeping with Wilsonian principles. Were it to be the center of the new Germanic States, organized on the system of the United States, we might hope to avoid many of the complications with which Central Europe is now filled.

"Russia remains a grave problem in our dealings with Germany. General Lavergne, who was our military attaché and has just returned to France, told me a few days ago that Bolshevism is more powerful than ever in Russia, though operating under the name of the Labour Party. The influence of Lenin and Trotzky has never been so absolute. But they are not working for Germany, they work exclusively for the Russian Revolution."

W. D.

On October 20, I had been invited to attend a great fête in the public square before the Hôtel de Ville, an event which I particularly remembered as it was the last military review I saw before the ending of the war. Having with me my friend President King of Oberlin College, I witnessed the review of the young 1920 class by the President of the Republic. In the presence of a vast multitude, these new recruits marched splendidly, preceded by the troops of all the Allied nations and being greeted with utmost enthusiasm. But there was an aspect which even at the time impressed me far more than the military one, splendid as was the showing made by these young men. I could read in the faces of all those near me, and of hundreds in the crowds beyond, that many like myself were breathing an involuntary prayer that day, because of the sadness of all the suffering endured and the sacrifices made since the beginning of August, 1914.

This sentiment also prevailed in my mind, as in the minds of others, when I attended the impressive scene at the Chamber on November 11, to hear M. Clemenceau announce the signing of the Armistice and read its conditions. The entrance of the Premier was a signal for prolonged cheering and there was frantic applause.

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For the German people had subscribed to the stern terms of President Wilson's noble reply of October 14, 1918.[1]

Within the Chamber, as among the vast throngs forming processions in the streets, there was great satisfaction, but with reverence for the memory of those who had died. In every gesture there was joy, but there were also dignity and poise among the people. Posters on the walls bade all to celebrate the occasion while recalling the sacrifices made. A proclamation of the Paris Municipal Council invited Paris to lay aside, in this hour of "triumphant victory," the proud reserve which had won for her the admiration of the world and to testify the infinite gratitude of France to her soldiers.

A few days later, in answer to a letter which I had sent him, Marshal Foch wrote to me:

Marshal Foch to Ambassador Sharp.

G.Q.G.A. *November* 27, 1918.

MR. AMBASSADOR,

The sentiment which inspired the terms of your letter touches me profoundly as well as your congratulations. I thank you very deeply for them.

Pray accept, Mr. Ambassador, the assurance of my high consideration.

F. FOCH.

Nor were Pershing's men forgotten in this great hour. High praise of their valour and of their conduct was heard on all sides, and I took an early occasion to visit some of our boys in their quarters at what a few days before had been the front.

[1] "What remains of the legend, on which so many have feasted, of an armistice secretly decided upon by an American dictator, suffered by the European Governments, imposed by their weakness upon the victorious armies in spite of the resistance of the generals? The Armistice was discussed in the open light of day. President Wilson consented to transmit it to his associates only on the threefold condition that its principle should be approved by the military authorities and its clauses drawn up by them; that it should be imposed upon the enemy and not debated with him; that it should prevent any reopening of hostilities and assure the submission of the vanquished to the peace conditions." André Tardieu, *La Paix*, original French edition, page 82.

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Telegram from Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

SECRETARY OF STATE, Paris, *November* 20, 1918.
Washington.

I spent Sunday and Monday visiting the more important points which the American troops had taken during the days preceding the Armistice, having accepted an invitation from General Bliss to go to the American Headquarters with him last Saturday.

* * * * * *

I believe every effort possible should be made to have troops immediately returned to America, although this is purely a military question and I hesitate to make recommendation on that account. The return home of all our young men with equal speed, except in numbers absolutely necessary to remain here, would be an act of great wisdom and would be an achievement complementary to the wonder with which the world witnessed the sending over of such enormous numbers of our American soldiers during the past six months. There is a unanimous desire among our soldiers to get back to America as soon as possible, after having placed themselves at the top in the esteem of the French people over all other troops for their general good behavior. SHARP.

Among the ceremonies which I witnessed, or in which I was called upon to participate at this period, particularly significant, coming just one week before the date on which arms were to be laid aside, was the unveiling of the monument erected at Béthelémont, in memory of the first three American soldiers fallen in battle on November 3, 1917, upon the French territory of Lorraine. Going to Nancy on this occasion, accompanied by my Naval Attaché, Captain Jackson, and being the guest of my friend M. Mirman, the Prefect, in the course of my dedication speech of this monument, constructed of stone from local quarries, I said:

"Added to the appreciation which my countrymen will feel for this touching manifestation of your sympathy for these heroes who have fallen in our common cause, and the expression of your gratitude for their help, comes a personal pride to me

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from the fact that my county of residence in America was named by its founder a hundred years ago, after your beautiful Lorraine. There is a further satisfaction also in the knowledge that many of the sons of the new Lorraine across the water are now on French soil, fighting for the freedom of the old. . . .

"In his eloquent speech, your distinguished Prefect, whom I have known as a personal friend from my early coming to France, has called attention to the fact that the first contingents of General Pershing to cross the Atlantic were instructed in Lorraine, and in that very part of this province which has gained world-wide fame as the birth-place of Jeanne d'Arc. In the life and noble mission of this sainted martyr to the cause of liberty, has not the world seen the spirit of France fully symbolized, during this mighty conflict in which this soil has been the storm-centre of battle?

"As we turn our footsteps away from all that is mortal of those whose sacrifice the ceremony of to-day commemorates, what greater tribute can we accord to their memory, and what greater honour pay to their fathers and mothers dwelling in my own distant land, than thus publicly to acknowledge the debts which humanity, freed from the menace of military domination, will ever owe to them?"

In the following April, immediately before leaving Paris, I visited a portion of the battlefields in which our boys had participated, and notably one of the many cemeteries where American soldiers alone are buried, between Villers-Cotterets and Soissons. It was a beautiful sentiment, as though the dying soldier had himself expressed his wish to be buried near where he fell. In all directions I could still see the mute evidences of the struggle in which the men of both sides had given up their lives, spilling their blood as freely as water. The tree-trunks blown from the highways, splintered and shattered all to pieces; the myriad of shell-holes making of the countryside a ravaged waste; the thoroughly wrecked buildings of the little towns through which we passed: and not many miles beyond the ruins of what had been one of the proudest towns of France—Soissons—were as eloquent as the cries of battle, but infinitely more impressive in their silence.

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CHAPTER XVI

ALSACE AND LORRAINE—FRENCH LIFE

IN December, 1918, it was my privilege to be at the side of the eminent and patriotic President of France, M. Raymond Poincaré, for the official entry of the French into the historic capitals of Lorraine and Alsace. These ceremonies left an imperishable memory engraved upon my mind for their exalted spirit of devotion to country. Just as in the face of adverse circumstances, throughout many years, noble restraint had been shown by the French people while separated from these provinces, so it was now that they victoriously re-entered them. There appeared throughout those eventful days of December 8 to 10 great joy and gratitude commingled with sorrow for the losses endured, but never anything approaching the less noble expressions of a mere sense of triumph.

Along with my colleagues of the Diplomatic Corps I had been invited to join the party consisting, besides the President of the Republic, of the Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament, which left Paris in three special trains on the evening of December 7, to arrive in Metz early on the morning of the 8th.

While making the journey to these cities in Alsace and Lorraine, the painful contrast was shown between a country devastated by an invading army and one whose soil had not felt the foot of a hostile soldier upon it.

Along all the distance extending from Meaux to the very eastern boundary of France, and especially after entering the region of Château-Thierry, passing through Châlons, Bar-le-Duc, and Nancy, even from the car windows one might see the ruin wrought upon French towns by German bombs, shells, and charges of dynamite placed methodically. But across the line of the recovered provinces, there was no evidence

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that the scourge of war had visited the country, apart from the traces in one or two spots where the long-distance guns of the American artillery had hurled shells in the vicinity of Metz.

Sitting at table in the dining-car and viewing this uninvaded territory, with all its towns and farmhouses unmolested, I listened to Paul Deschanel, President of the Chamber of Deputies, as he made bitter comment upon the contrast between the two scenes. With that fine choice of words in which few are his equals, he spoke of the object lesson which it all taught and of "the added infamy which must forever rest upon German methods of warfare." His terms of denunciation might have been well calculated to support the desire for retaliation in kind which possessed no small part of the public sentiment, at the time of the signing of the Armistice.

The demonstrations at Metz and, for that matter, along the road at the smaller towns, brought ocular proof of the loyalty of the population. Enormous crowds thronged the streets and buildings on the line of march, giving the most cordial welcome to the representatives of the French Government.

The capital of Lorraine presented a stirring picture with baskets of flowers scattered everywhere, and garlands, oriflammes, and flags adorning every window when M. Poincaré and M. Clemenceau, accompanied by the Presidents of the Senate and of the Chamber of Deputies, and the members of the Government, set foot on the soil of Lorraine.

Marshal Foch was the one to greet the President of France and the Premier. This ceremony, extremely simple though it was, had a special grandeur because the Generalissimo saluted France in the name of all the Powers of the Entente, represented by their Generals-in-Chief and their Ambassadors.

I noted near me on the Esplanade de la République, as they bowed in a friendly gesture of respect before France, Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig and Lord Derby; General Albricci and M. Bonin-Longare; Generals Pershing, Liggett, and Bullard; General Gillard; General Haller and many of the great French leaders who for fifty-two months had defended the soil and reconquered the lost provinces, Marshal Joffre,

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Marshal Pétain, Generals Gouraud, Fayolle, Debeney, Buat, de Castelnau, Anthoine, Mordacq.

But it was the next day at Strasbourg that a veritable fête day had been planned for the party, doubtless largely due to the greater size and population of the Alsatian capital.

As our train drew into the handsome station, we were greeted by vast throngs to do honour to the first party of distinguished Frenchmen who, since the beginning of the war, had been privileged to set foot in that city. High local officials received us, and joyous shouts of "Vive la France! Vive Poincaré! Vive Clemenceau!" came from ten thousand throats of wildly enthusiastic people lining the streets and public places.

After visiting the Hôtel de Ville and the famous Cathedral, we witnessed for more than two hours in steady procession a most remarkable parade—if such it may be called—differing in character from anything I had ever seen before. It had, in fact, a character of its own, as it seemed to partake neither of the French nor of the German kind of manifestation. Besides various military features, there were representatives of many civic bodies and a seemingly endless procession of Alsatian girls. These last were dressed in native costumes, though some represented much earlier times in the history of the country, marching along in distinctive groups each comprising ten or a dozen of these young women. The changing sheens of the great silk bows as the only headgear made a picture which might be the envy of an artist. Designed in various colours, these great bows—some of them having a width of two feet—as they bobbed up and down in the dancing motion of their wearers looked like the most wonderfully hued butterflies. Some were golden, others scarlet red; some blue and others of seemingly every colour of the rainbow. This, added to the quaint picturesque bodices worn by these Alsatian maidens, made a scene of beauty unforgettable for those who were privileged to witness it.

What a prophetic fulfilment was brought by this scene, of the solemn declaration made nearly fifty years before by the fathers of these sons and daughters gaily parading before me! On March 1, 1871, upon quitting the National Assembly, then

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holding sessions at Bordeaux, which had been charged with the grave task of making a forced peace with Germany and had consented to the surrender of Alsace and a part of Lorraine, the Deputies of those provinces had unanimously voiced a protest which is worth repeating. It showed their undying loyalty and devotion to France, and, at the same time, a sublime faith in the coming of the time when they should be as a reunited family:

"We declare once more," these Deputies said, "null and void a pact disposing of us without our consent, the revendication of our rights remains forever open to each and all within the power and limits dictated to us by our conscience. At the time of leaving this room where our dignity forbids our further stay, and despite the bitterness of our grief, the supreme thought deep in our minds is of gratitude towards those who for six months have not ceased to defend us, and of unalterable attachment to the mother country from which we are torn by violence. We shall follow you in our wishes of welfare and shall wait, confident in the future, to see a regenerated France resuming the course of her great destiny.

"Your brothers of Alsace and Lorraine, who are severed for the time being from the common family, will treasure a filial affection for absent France, in anticipation of the day when they shall be brought together again."

If there ever had existed any doubt, in the minds of those who now visited these liberated cities, as to the sentiments of their people toward France after nearly a half-century of enforced separation, the spontaneous enthusiasm and almost frenzied joy of the masses of humanity which packed the streets and public places dispelled the last vestiges of uncertainty. The depth of feeling displayed would be difficult to describe by the use of mere words. Perhaps the mutual joy which is to be found at the reunion of the members of a family long separated might most suitably describe the feelings shown by these people. When President Poincaré in one of his speeches said, "The Plebiscite is an accomplished fact," he gave expression to a truth amply demonstrated in every incident of this historic occasion.

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As I stood in my place on the reviewing stand but a few feet away from President Poincaré and Premier Clemenceau, to both of whom almost constant cries of salutation were being addressed by those in the procession, I thought I had never viewed in my life anything so inspiring.

Looking across the line of march, and away beyond the open place so packed with people that the tree-tops were filled with them, rising in the majesty of its splendid proportions to a height of nearly five hundred feet stood the tower-like spire of the Cathedral of Strasbourg, to which its history dating back to medieval times, coupled with its famous clock, have drawn the tourists of the world. As if to give its benign approval to the results which had eventuated in this ceremony, there waved from its very top a great flag in the tricolour of France.

It had been almost fifty years since that flag could have been permitted to display its graceful folds from that temple of worship. It was indeed not a little gratifying to see that, amidst the thousands of the flags of the French Republic which decorated the buildings throughout the city, our own American flag was conspicuous enough to be noticed with great frequency. And well it might, for was it not the brave bearers of that flag from far across the seas who, at the signing of the Armistice, were the ones nearest to the border line of that enemy which had separated these Alsatian people for so long a time from their mother country? Were there not myriads of little mounds marking the last resting-place of many of those same heroes, dotting the hillsides of the Argonne, who had died in their attempt to make possible the consummation of what this day meant?

From such emblems floating everywhere above my head, I was made to feel that in that very hour of triumph these people of Strasbourg and Metz had not forgotten America.

During all the time covering my official, as well as what may be termed personal, acquaintance with President Poincaré, I had never seen him so happy as during the hours of this visit to the cities of Alsace and Lorraine. While amiability and kindliness of manner may be said always to characterize his conduct in meeting others, yet time and again during great

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functions, whether at the Sorbonne and the Trocadero, with their huge seating capacities, or on the open stand reviewing the passing of troops—and I have seen him not a few times on such occasions—I have noticed expressions of deep sorrow on his face, indicative, I might almost say, of gloom. One could not help but feel that his heart was heavy with the grave responsibilities, the outcome of which at times seemed so much in doubt. But now all had been changed. The regaining of Alsace and Lorraine was, to use his own words, indeed an accomplished fact.

During one of these scenes incidental to the usual speech-making—which was a part of the programme of the day at Strasbourg—the great crowd present was as much surprised as it was moved to see the President, at the conclusion of his remarks, turn round and, pressing the rugged form of Clemenceau to his bosom, kiss him ardently—French fashion—first on one cheek and then on the other. A most audible form of approval went up at this manifestation of what they took to be a genuine reconciliation between two men who before, according to those believed to be in a position to know, had shown mutual distrust and dislike, probably born of old-time antagonisms.

An incident quite as unique as it was unexpected was to close the ceremonies of the day which, be it said to the credit of those having charge of the programme, had been well arranged and quite faithfully carried out. Singularly enough, it appears to have been overlooked in retrospective dealings with this event, although the fact that it was not reported upon in papers at the time is explicable for obvious reasons.

Though the map shows Strasbourg as located on the Rhine, yet, as a matter of fact, it is situated about two miles inland. I think many of the visitors in the Presidential party looked forward to the last item on the programme—that of crossing the big bridge over the Rhine at that point into Germany—as the culminating feature. As the days were rapidly shortening at that season of the year, but little time was left, after the rest of the programme had been finished, to cross the river within the hours of daylight. Rapid progress was therefore made by

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the procession of automobiles which carried our party from the city to the edge of the great bridge. Here, dismounting, the procession, headed by President Poincaré and Premier Clemenceau, walking side by side, followed by the Marshals and a thousand or so of high Army officers and dignitaries, started to cross.

As it had been many years since I had last seen this celebrated waterway of Germany, I looked down from the high level of the bridge on to the swiftly flowing river, with many pleasant reminiscences of my former acquaintance with it. I think it was General Pershing who was near my side at the time.

Suddenly, to the surprise of everybody, at a point in the middle of the bridge, we ran squarely up against a barricade of timbers which had been placed across its entire width. Behind this barricade stood an armed German sentinel. If any of us expected that this sentinel would step aside with that affability and politeness which would have characterized every Frenchman in such a place, in the presence of such distinguished personages as the President of the Republic and the Premier, we were to be quickly disillusioned. Nothing of the kind. With a display of no more politeness than was absolutely necessary, he informed his distinguished interrogators, who asked permission to pass, that while the Armistice had stated that the Allies might enter Germany over specific routes, the Strasbourg bridge had not been specifically mentioned; he flatly refused to heed any of the reasons invoked against this, alleging that he had been instructed by the German Military Authorities to allow no one to proceed across the bridge beyond that point; he must follow his instructions and any violation of them would be in contravention of the terms of the Armistice.

It was evident that only the exhibition of force would enable our party to proceed further. But this was the juncture at which M. Clemenceau, in his rugged and forceful manner, yet, withal, that politeness which seems never to desert a Frenchman, said to the German guard:

"If that be so, we will show you with how much greater respect France treats the inviolability of her agreements than

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her enemy," and turning upon his heel he left the guard standing alone. He was followed by the entire procession with President Poincaré, the Marshals of France, the Diplomatic Corps, and all the officers and officials, who walked back the three miles to the centre of the town without putting foot on that particular German soil. More than one hundred and fifty men had stood close enough to overhear every word of what had passed. It was an occasion when it was indeed interesting to be behind the censor. But it cannot be denied that the party, as it proceeded back, was not a little disappointed at this sudden change in its plans.

That night, after repairing to its comfortable quarters on the train at the station, the party left for Colmar and Mulhouse, as the noteworthy points of its third and last day in Alsace and Lorraine.

As I reviewed the remarkable scenes which characterized my visit to a country which nearly a half-century before had been exacted as a war tribute by a conquering nation, and then as I remembered how from a hundred rostrums I had heard the most brilliant of French orators proclaim that the return of Alsace and Lorraine to France was the *sine qua non* which alone would signalize the triumph of her cause, a new significance attached itself to the things I had just seen take place before my very eyes.

Perhaps if there had been any one slogan which was used by French orators, and for that matter by writers in the Press, almost to the exclusion of any other during all the war, it was that which called for the return of Alsace and Lorraine—the righting of the wrong of 1871. And yet, as I recall the early formation of this Article of Faith into a concrete expression, its place as one of the indispensable conditions of the war on the part of France was the result of development.

From this I would not have the reader infer that such a proposition had not from the very beginning been in the minds of the people, but rather its finally accepted status had not then really advanced to the position which it attained as the war progressed.

I remember one occasion when before a great audience,

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M. Viviani, former president of the Council, in the masterly manner of oratory for which he is noted, boldly proclaimed in effect that the wrong committed by Germany in forcibly taking Alsace and Lorraine should be righted; that until those provinces had again been returned to France his country would fight on—"*jusqu'au bout.*" The memory of that wrong had been kept alive all those years in the minds of every Frenchman; it did not need the mute reminder in the form of the statue representing Strasbourg in the Place de la Concorde to keep it alive: "*France Quand Même!*"

Uttered as were these words of M. Viviani as though in living fire, I could not bring myself to believe that, at the time when they were delivered, there was a universal confidence in their fulfilment. The fortunes of war had not yet turned sufficiently to augur such a result.

It was in answer to this contention on the part of France that the German Government reiterated the oft-repeated claim that, as these provinces had originally belonged to Germany, having been taken by force away from her by French arms under Louis XIV, that wrong had only been righted by the result of the war of '70 to '71. It was insisted upon that the fulfilment of that justice furnished the motive for restoring that territory to its original rightful owner—Germany.

However, a refutation of this claim as dramatic as it was unexpected was furnished in a most unusual manner. Standing in the rostrum before a great audience in the amphitheatre of the Sorbonne,[1] the scene of many demonstrations growing out of the war, M. Pichon, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the conclusion of a remarkably able speech, took from the table before him a letter, the reading of which furnished a climax which not only moved his great audience but, on the following day, excited widespread comment throughout the Press of France. The Minister held in his hand a copy of a letter which had been written from Versailles by Emperor William I to the Empress Eugénie, then unfortunately a virtual prisoner in Paris. The letter was in the Emperor's own handwriting, in French, and read as follows:

[1] March 1, 1918.

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Letter from the King of Prussia to Empress Eugénie.

MADAME,

I have received the letter which Your Majesty was so good as to address to me and which evoked memories of the past which I cannot recall without regrets.

No one deplores more than I the blood shed in this war which Your Majesty well knows was not provoked by me.

Ever since the opening of hostilities, my constant preoccupation has been to make every effort to restore for Europe the benefits of Peace, if the means thereto were afforded me by France. An understanding would have been easy as long as the Emperor Napoleon considered himself authorized to negotiate, and my Government did not refuse to discuss the proposals of Jules Favre offering him the means to restore Peace to France.

When at Ferrières negotiations seemed to be opened in the name of Your Majesty, a warm reception was given them and all facilities were granted to Marshal Bazaine to take contact with Your Majesty, and when General Boyer came here, it was still possible to reach an arrangement, provided the preliminary conditions could be fulfilled without delay, but the time passed without the indispensable guarantees being given for entering into negotiations.

I love my country, Madame, as you love yours, and consequently understand the bitterness which fills the heart of Your Majesty and feel sincere sympathy for you. But after having made immense sacrifices for her defence, Germany wants to be assured that the next war will find her better prepared to repel the aggression upon which we can count as soon as France shall have restored her strength and gained Allies.

It is the said consideration alone, and not the desire to extend our native land whose territory is already large enough, which compels me to insist upon cessions of territory which have no other aim than to move farther away the starting point of a French army which might come to attack us in the future.

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I am unable to judge if Your Majesty was authorized to accept in the name of France the conditions demanded by Germany, but I believe that by doing so you would have spared for your country much suffering and would have preserved from anarchy a nation whose Emperor had for twenty years succeeded in developing its prosperity.

Pray believe, Madame, in the sentiments with which I remain,

Your Majesty's good brother,

WILLIAM.

Versailles, *October* 25, 1870.

The electrifying effect of the reading of such a message sent, nearly a half-century before, by one who was in a better position than any other man in the world to be the voice of his country, can well be imagined. Its force lost none of its effect from the powerful manner in which M. Pichon made this exposé of the real purpose of Germany in those fateful days of '70 and '71. It was then not for the purpose of righting a great historic wrong, but of furnishing a military barrier which should be as a protecting buffer from any future wars directed from the west against Germany.

Whether at that time material calculation had also entered into the seizing of these provinces, pre-dating the period of the greatly enhanced value, as a national asset, of deposits of iron, coal, and potash, may be questioned. That long before the beginning of the World War, however, Germany had come to realize the value of the natural resources in that direction which these provinces possessed, had become too apparent to be questioned. In fact, any thought of their possible surrender was taken by the economic writers of Germany as a forerunner of the destruction of her industrial position. The "Never" of Von Kuhlmann had indeed far greater force back of it, for these economic reasons, than even those so frankly expressed by Emperor William I nearly a half-century before.

The story of the procuring of this letter is an interesting one, and I have never seen it in print. M. Hugenschmidt, a gentleman who enjoys the friendship of the aged Empress herself,

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now residing, as for many years past, in England,[1] and in her ninetieth year, is responsible for the following narrative.

Visiting me at my office one day soon after M. Pichon had in such a sensational manner given publicity to the letter, M. Hugenschmidt handed me a photographic copy of the original and informed me that he had, as a matter of fact, brought its existence to the attention of the French Government. He then related how he had, a short time before, mentioned to M. Clemenceau that the Empress had shown to him an original letter written to her by the German Emperor. Realizing the importance of its publication upon the vital issues then at stake, Premier Clemenceau urged him to see if he could not get the consent of the Empress to this publication. Visiting England soon after, M. Hugenschmidt brought the matter to her attention. At first she declined to allow the use of the letter for publication. When told, however, of the benefit that might result from such action for her country, she said to him, "If that is true, as a lover of France, the letter shall be placed at my country's service." This was done, with the result which I have mentioned.[2]

Few if any stranger things have come out of this war than that

[1] Empress Eugénie died July 11, 1920.

[2] I am indebted to the kindness of Count Serge Fleury, of the Press Bureau of the Paris Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for additional details as follows: It appears that M. Clemenceau, knowing the high esteem in which Empress Eugénie held M. Hugenschmidt, sent the latter to England with a mission to ask the ex-Sovereign for all the documents she had relative to the 1870 War, with a view to enlightening European opinion on the question of Alsace and Lorraine. The Empress took out from her archives the letter which William I had addressed to her, but when M. Hugenschmidt expressed the desire to take this away with him, the Empress replied: "No, do not let us stir up the past. I no longer exist. I do not wish to be talked about any more." She furthermore exclaimed: "These papers are my only friends!" M. Hugenschmidt argued that they had a national interest which would be of great importance to the Allies. The Empress then said: "If these papers can be of service to France, I shall give them at once. You will receive them to-morrow." But M. Hugenschmidt having added a remark to the effect that they would supply a striking justification for the Empress herself, she immediately wished to take back the promise she had just given, because of her horror of anything that looked like an attempt at self-advertising or even self-justification.—W. D.

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at the end of a half-century from the time this letter was written, the world-changing events should by their inexorable decrees bring forth from the very chamber, perhaps, in which that letter was written, a document which should serve to take away again from Germany that protecting barrier which a conquering Emperor had sought to provide for its security.

On one afternoon there came by appointment to the Embassy a delegation made up of a distinguished personnel of Alsatians, carrying with them several volumes, beautifully bound.

This visit had been preceded by a letter dated October 29, 1918, from M. C. Wurtz, Councillor of State, in his capacity as President of the Committee for the Address of the Alsatians and Lorrainers to President Wilson.

Writing in the name of M. Jules Cambon and asking me to grant them an audience, he went on to recall that in January, 1918 President Wilson had spoken words regarding the future and the rights of Alsace and Lorraine which had deeply moved the hearts of his compatriots. The initiative had therefore been taken, notably, by Mme. Brun and Mme. Lauth-Bossert of Lorraine, who wrote the address of thanks " to the illustrious statesman who has thus asserted the prerogatives of our native land, Alsace and Lorraine." This address, with a Preface by M. Welshinger, Member of the Institute of France, was supplemented by no less than 700,000 signatures of those who sent the expression of the unchangeable will of Alsatians and Lorrainers to have Alsace and Lorraine come back to their mother country. The text of the address was as follows:

" The Alsatians and Lorrainers residing in France, in their name and on behalf of their brothers still kept under foreign bondage, unite in an impulse of deep gratitude to thank President Wilson for his intervention in favour of Alsace and Lorraine, so greatly oppressed, and to assert once more their unalterable will to have Alsace and Lorraine come back to the mother country."

M. Wurtz went on to explain that in order to secure as many authentic signatures as possible, comprising Alsatians and Lorrainers having the blood in their veins, that is to say

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who were born in the Departments annexed by the Germans in 1871 or whose ancestors were born there, hundreds of thousands of forms were printed and sent round. It was these forms, all duly signed, which had been gathered together in a golden book, the first volume bearing a bronze medal representing the twin profiles of Alsace and Lorraine, which was destined for President Wilson and which I was requested to transmit to him.

It was explained to me that this work had been of a strictly private character, no official intervention had been admitted, although the approval of the Government of the French Republic had necessarily been secured. All the signatures had been freely given, anything that could offer even an idea of coercion being carefully avoided. For this reason no forms were sent to reconquered Alsace under the jurisdiction of French officers, where some 35,000 additional signatures could readily have been secured; nor in the concentration camps where Alsatians and Lorrainers were housed; nor among prisoners of war, figured at some 15,000; nor yet among the 25,000 young men who had left Alsace and Lorraine at the time of the declaration of war and had enlisted in the French Army; nor in the regiments where many officers and soldiers born in Alsace and Lorraine would gladly have given their signatures. All these and others had been deliberately set aside, rather than run the risk of a charge from Germany that one single signer of the address lacked spontaneity.

It clearly appeared from this and innumerable other manifestations that the question of the return of Alsace and Lorraine had its champions not only among the statesmen of France during the sunny as well as stormy days of the war, but had furthermore the ardent support of those who, born in those departments before the Franco-Prussian War, had moved away as young men rather than remain subjects of the conqueror. Their devotion to a cause which was never looked upon by them as lost, bordered on the pathetic. In public meetings, in touching ceremonies made under the most sentimental circumstances, they declared for the restoration to the mother country of the severed provinces.

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One of the most prominent of the leaders in this movement was M. Jules Siegfried, member of the Chamber of Deputies from Havre. He had been born eighty-two years before, in the city of Mulhouse, a fact which his residence in France for more than forty years never permitted him to forget. Tall, erect, and as well preserved as any man twenty years his junior, he seemed never to tire in advancing the cause of either his beloved mother province of Alsace or his Protestantism. It was his delight to tell Americans that he had in his early manhood visited the City of Washington and there had accepted the hospitality of President and Mrs. Lincoln at the White House.

Describing this incident, he said to me: "I was naturally very desirous to see the Chief Executive of a great country like America. Having such letters of introduction as permitted me to be received by the President, I was one day ushered into his room where he was at work. Instead of sitting at his desk, he was standing up at a high desk or table on which lay before him the sheets on which he had been writing. Before he had greeted me, in hastily scanning the room I recall seeing something that made a vivid impression on my memory. It was a pair of high boots that would have seemed to be high enough to reach far above the knees of a man of ordinary stature. Coming forward to shake hands with me, President Lincoln made me feel at home very quickly. A few moments later I was privileged to meet Mrs. Lincoln, who was very cordial to me."

Not being satisfied with simply seeing the President of the United States, young Siegfried was fired with the ambition to see a real live American Indian. He was told that he could not gratify his ambition short of going to the North-West as far as Minneapolis. Nothing daunted, he made the trip and told me with great pleasure of how he journeyed down the Mississippi river from that city to an island, where he saw a few specimens of the Red Man in all his native glory.

The distinguished Deputy made his second visit to America exactly forty years after his first, and he now cherishes the hope that he may be permitted to make a third visit in sixty years' time from the date of his first.

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Discussing with him on one occasion, during the weeks of the Peace Conference, his views on the future of these provinces, I found him full of faith. Contrary to what might have been expected from one whose home country had suffered so much during so many years, he did not believe that its prosperity would be advanced by using unduly harsh measures toward the German elements of the population. He declared his belief in the nationalizing of those who had married Alsatian women and whose property interests, as well as their inclination, would augur for their loyalty toward the country in which many of them had lived all their lives.

I found this generous as well as optimistic outlook about Alsace and Lorraine to be widespread among those in a position to know conditions there.

A letter from Prefect Mirman,[1] dated from the Préfecture de la République at Metz, April 14, 1919, gave me interesting details.

He said that the extreme and spontaneous joy of the Lorrainers in becoming French once again had not only been pathetic but had even surpassed all the hopes of France. The entire state of public sentiment in Lorraine as well as in Alsace brought a further proof that Germany by entering and reigning as a master there had caused herself to be hated, there being "an absolute incompatibility between her moral sensitiveness and that of our race." Furthermore, during the long years of the war, the Germans seemed to have gone out of their way to irritate the local population by a minuteness of vexatious measures surpassing anything which a healthy imagination was capable of conceiving. He gave two instances as follows:

"I recently made the acquaintance of Abbé Etienne, an old white-haired priest from the environs of Metz. On August 1, 1914, he was arrested and thrown into prison at Mayence, together with his old sister who died there. His crime? He confessed it to me, and here it is:

[1] Léon Mirman, whom Ambassador Sharp had visited during the war at the Nancy Préfecture and who, after the Armistice, was appointed High Commissioner at Metz. He is now a Counsellor of the Paris Cour des Comptes.

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"Some little time before the war he had just finished a catechism lesson for Lorraine and German children when, passing through the church, he heard two of them commenting on his words.

"The little Lorrainer was saying to the little Boche: 'The *curé* has just been talking to us about Paradise. Do you know where Paradise is?' The child of Germania replied with assurance: 'It is somewhere in Prussia.' The old *curé* was indignant, less as a priest than as a Frenchman, I imagine. He exclaimed: 'Paradise in Prussia? Shut up, you little fool!' This was a rash protest, a crime of *lèse-majesté*. He soon got proof of it. Such a man was judged to be dangerous, and on August 1 he was imprisoned. This is not an invention, my dear Mr. Sharp. It is the exact narrative made to me yesterday, with scornful disdain in his voice, by this aged and holy white-haired priest.

"Here is another example: During the war, it was absolutely forbidden to speak French, and the German professors basely quizzed Lorraine pupils, endeavouring to secure admissions of a nature to compromise their parents; and it was forbidden to write any street-sign in French. Emile Dupont the baker, Auguste Durand the carpenter, had to Germanize their Christian names by erasing the painted E. Even before our return, these proscribed letters E reappeared in brand-new condition on the battered old signs. This prohibition even extended to the cemeteries. A mayor in Lorraine told me that having lost his little boy Georges during the war, he was compelled to inscribe the name on the tomb in German, 'Georg.' But the German authorities having observed that he had left enough space to restore the letters 'es' some day, he was forced to erase the entire inscription and was condemned to two weeks in prison.

"There were other instances of the kind which contributed to make the Germans simply hated in their efforts to demonstrate their moral superiority. Lorrainers and Alsatians are of the same race, the same family, the same mind, the same sensitiveness as the French, and the fibres of their heart and soul are the same. When the Boches tried to win them

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gracefully they disgusted them, when they tried to conquer them by force they exasperated them into resistance."

The political future of Alsace and Lorraine was viewed without apprehension by Prefect Mirman, saying that the numerous German workmen, employees, and artisans who would remain would rapidly fuse with the French population, they would not be interfered with and the only thing asked of them would be to remain peaceful; as for German "intellectuals," they would be not expelled but repatriated. The commercial and industrial problem was envisaged by him as depending, to a great extent, upon the English and the Americans who before the war, while esteeming France in other domains, had under-estimated her industrial initiative, but had learned better and recognized their error during the war, and whose help and sympathy would thenceforth be needed by France for her recovered provinces as well as for herself.

"Germany," he wrote, "kept her mines intact while systematically destroying a great part of ours. For long years to come we shall be in a condition of inferiority in regard to Germany on most of the markets of the world. Will the ideas superior to the interests of the day, the permanent ideas which are the sole real conquest of honour, the ideas of justice, asserted by the United States as the noblest of champions, be satisfied, if upon those markets mutilated France is treated exactly like the aggressor who deliberately reduced her to a condition of inferiority in production?"

For any who had visited devastated France as I had done, there could be but one answer to such a question.

Despite the many changes which have occurred since the days of the Revolution, a sojourner among the French people is made to feel that the great principles which were enunciated at that time are still those by which the conduct of her people is squared. In their behaviour toward each other I have never seen exhibited that pompousness which wealth or social position sometimes begets, and this though it may be some important member of the Government accosted by the humblest labourer on the street. Someone has said that a Spaniard would prefer to have his request for a favour politely refused than rudely

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granted. As applied to the Frenchman, this might be an extreme illustration; but the manner in which he would ask such a favour would in any event compel a polite answer. Whether one is asked the time of day by some hastily passing errand-boy, the direction to a street desired by the stranger, or the slightest kind of other attention, the feeling of appreciation which invariably is shown in return for its granting is but consistent with that conduct which, like a magnet, irresistibly draws one's sympathy and affection to these people. The desire to please is inborn among them.

It is my belief that the attributes of her people, which have given to France the affection as well as the confidence of all those who sojourn among them, are the outgrowth of their religion. Most certainly, in their greatest crisis, the people of France were unshaken in the principles of their faith. But this faith had existed as a national asset for centuries before. The Great War only tested how firm were its foundations. It has remained for Maurice Barrès, briefly quoted in a previous chapter, to tell how great was the measure of that faith among the soldiers at the Front—and it was one faith, whether of a Marshal Foch, a General de Castelnau, or the humblest poilu.

The gifted Barrès has seen as few others the workings of that faith through the many letters of soldiers written from the trenches. I should like all my readers to possess this little book, *The Faith of France*, an autographed copy of which was presented to me by the author, with its scores of letters penned in some instances to give the last messages of soldiers, and all indicative of the deep spiritual grip of their nature. But it was the expression of a religion higher than any one denomination, sect, or creed.

The wonderful spirit that pervaded France was of course due first of all to devotion to country, but secondly to the Church. When saying the Church I mean all religion but more particularly the Roman Catholic Church of which more than ninety-seven per cent. of the people of France are members.[1] Consequently, the Church of Rome exercised a

[1] These figures were exact in 1918–1919, accounting as Catholics all who were baptized as such. Owing to the influx of foreigners since the war,

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great influence on the victory of France and of the Allies. The various French Cardinals at Rheims and elsewhere, as well as the Archbishops and Bishops, were of constant service to the soldiers. More than twenty-five thousand of the French Roman Catholic Clergy served as soldiers on the battle-line.[1]

I have seen Cardinal Amette before a great concourse of people, whether at Notre Dame or the Madeleine, give utterance to truths as patriotic as they were statesmanlike. On one occasion at Notre Dame, when all my diplomatic colleagues had been invited, in conjunction with Cardinal Luçon, the martyr of Rheims, he discussed the momentous questions concerning the nations in such a manner as to reflect the greatest credit upon his country and his Church. At the Church of the Oratoire, I have heard the eloquent preacher and my good friend, Pastor Wagner, express in no less forceful manner the allegiance of the Protestants to the great cause. The death of Wagner, in the midst of his usefulness, was a personal loss to me, as I had learned to know and to love him through his world-famous book, *The Simple Life*.

One of the last functions of a public character in which I participated and spoke, reading at the time the greetings of President Wilson, was before an immense audience at the Trocadero, given under the auspices of the Protestant Churches of France. One of the many touching farewells which came to me on my leave-taking of my mission was one signed by those who had been most active in the cause of Protestantism.

It was indeed the important part which the Church—and I again speak of all denominations—played in crystallizing and unifying the forces of the French nation in the prosecution of the war that caused me, in one of my dispatches to the Department, to give special prominence to this factor. I had been

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and the conditions of life in the agglomerations around Paris, the percentage is now approximated at anywhere between 90 and 93.

[1] Far from exaggerating the figure, Ambassador Sharp under-estimated it. According to more complete statistics gathered by the *Maison de la Bonne Presse* in 1921–1922, and published notably in *L'Action Populaire*, June 25, 1925, 32,699 French Catholic priests were mobilized, and 4,618, or 13·2 per cent., were killed.

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asked by the Department of State to give my views at that particular time upon the relative strength of certain political elements in France. I had prefaced, in my dispatch, a consideration of the different phases of that subject by giving an outline of some of the factors which, in my judgment, must exert a powerful influence upon the strength and purpose of those different elements.

Twenty years ago, as the result of the crystallization of a sentiment which had existed in powerful political circles for many years, the Church was separated from the State, and its property confiscated. Certainly no event has occurred since that period which has done so much to soften the hostility toward the Church as the lessons of the war. The visit to Rome of Cardinals Amette and Luçon has been the sequel. The sacrifice and patriotism of those devoted to its service have disarmed its critics in the high as well as the low places of public influence. One might well have asked if, out of it all, a representative of the Vatican would not be again received by the French Foreign Office.[1]

But there was another feature in French life to which I also called attention in my dispatch to the Department. I am sure that next to the proverbial politeness of manner, the evidence of goodwill and desire to please, to which I have referred, the quality of the French people which most impresses the stranger is that of their intellectual acumen.

Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

Paris, *September* 14, 1918.

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington.

SIR:

. . . . . .

One cannot but be impressed, in traveling throughout France, with the thought that all her people have a joint

[1] As foreseen by Ambassador Sharp in 1919, diplomatic relations between France and the Holy See, broken off when the Papal Nuncio Monsignor Lorenzelli was recalled in 1904, subsequent to the rupture of the Concordat

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proprietary interest in her prosperity—in her very soil. This feeling of a sort of co-ownership and common responsibility permeates the people, from the industrious little shopkeeper and the tireless worker on the small fields up to the most important men at the head of the big enterprises of the country. There has never been the tramp nuisance such as we know it in America. Such a people will not lightly destroy the pillars which support their own temples. These self-interests, so diversified in their nature, must account in no little measure for that love of country and patriotism which have so distinguished France in this war.

But it cannot be denied that there exists a kind of provincialism which has kept them from commingling with and settling among other peoples of the world—certainly to a degree unknown by any other European nation. It was M. Cambon who said to me one day, when I spoke of the remarkable thrift and economy of the French people, that he feared that for the proper development of his country there was too much of it; that contentment came with too little achievement, and that the big things in a people's development were lost sight of in too much fixedness of purpose in attaining the small things.

Indeed, the system of "dots" in the nature of dowries, which each young woman is supposed to possess before her marriage, has had the effect from time almost immemorial of stimulating the desire to have the size of that "dot" as large as possible. The result has been, in part due to this system, the limitation of the size of families, a misfortune far-reaching in every phase of national life, social, economic, and even military. Then, too, the large licence fee which I understand the Government imposes for the marriage ceremony only adds to this burden. Even within the past few months a Society

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established between Napoleon and Pope Pius VII, were restored in 1921, when on August 6 Monsignor (now Cardinal) Cerretti presented his Letters of Credence to President Millerand. In more recent years, the wise and tolerant attitude of President of the Republic Gaston Doumergue, himself a Protestant, has greatly facilitated and improved relations between Church and State in France.

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embracing some of the members of the Chamber of Deputies has been formed to bring about conditions which will have for their purpose to call the attention of the people of France to this deplorable condition.[1]

But thrift and an inborn desire to save are qualities no more characteristic of the French than is their appreciation of knowledge. One of the first impressions that must come to a sojourner in France is the degree of respect shown to men of learning, and the high places accorded them in the popular mind. While accounts of those who would come under the head in America of "Captains of Industry," men of great achievement in the industrial and financial world, are given but scant space in the books, magazines, and press, stories of the scientist, of the man of letters, and of the idealist fill pages. Since the days of the Revolution, idealism has not lost its hold upon the French mind. It has never been stronger than to-day, nor perhaps, withal, more rational. However, it may still lack something of the Anglo-Saxon staidness.

In no other country is the daily paper more widely read than in France. With its 2,500,000 readers, the *Petit Parisien* has probably a larger circulation than that of all the big New York dailies combined. Nearly a score of other daily Parisian papers also enjoy a large circulation. Magazines, brochures, pamphlets, are issued in great numbers. Indeed, I believe that this wide dissemination of knowledge among the masses has inevitably tended to a rationalism in the advocacy of principles and in the very conception of ideals themselves. Such a condition is bound to exert a marked influence upon any future popular actions, and will differentiate them from the extreme radicalism of past revolutionary movements. It is a force

[1] In a statistical study entitled *Le Fisc contre la famille*, M. Georges Dovime has shown that the entire French fiscal system is responsible for depopulation, not only large families but even marriage itself being discriminated against, while bachelors alone are favoured. (See *La Revue Universelle*, December 1, 1929.) M. Henri Mazel, discussing M. Fernand Aubertin's work *En péril de la mort*, has mentioned that in 1927 there were only 742,000 births in France, whereas 1,000,000 were necessary; he divided the blame, however, between the fiscal laws and hygienic conditions detrimental to health. (See *Le Mercure de France*, November 15, 1929.)

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worth taking into consideration in seeking properly to gauge the position which the country will take, in meeting the grave problems attending the settlement of the war.

More perhaps as influencing after-war conditions than as shaping war and peace policies which must go before, should be mentioned the place which religion and the Church occupy in the life and politics of France. The student of history of thirty years ago, as it concerns the agitation of the State against the Church, and, later, the radical measures adopted in forcing their separation, might well be frankly astounded at the exhibition of patriotism and devotion to country on the part of the leading exponents of the Church. The distress of France, the perils of her exalted principles, her very freedom as a nation, have brought into a common melting-pot the patriotic devotion of the clerical and anti-clerical. Old religious prejudices promise to become but the discarded dross in such a fiery process.

The devout Catholic and heroic General de Castelnau, who played such a conspicuous part in beating back the Bavarians in their attempt to join other German invaders at the Valley of the Marne, has lost three sons in the cause. The aged patriarch Denys Cochin, Catholic member of a former War Ministry and prominent Churchman, has given two of his three sons to the same cause, and so on down the long list. Marshal Foch goes to early morning prayer in his church before each day's battle.

To-day, it is an eloquent Protestant preacher, in the presence of the President of the Republic and high officials of the Government, preaching a war funeral sermon over the body of the Swiss Counsellor of the Legation, killed by a German shell; to-morrow one attends a great meeting in Notre Dame, where ten thousand people gather to hear the exhortations of the eminent Cardinal Amette and the heroic Luçon—the devoted Cardinal of Rheims—to undying allegiance to France and her cause.

A thousand churches and ancient cathedrals erected by the zeal of the priesthood in the times of Catholic France daily shelter multitudes of worshippers, among whom are a great

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number of soldiers returning for a brief respite from the front. From Marseilles to Havre, from Lorraine to the west coast of Brittany, I have seen this manifestation of faith by the people in a Higher Power, which is as moving as it is prophetic of the triumph of the principles to which they have given such allegiance. Prophetic, too, not only of a deeper religious national life, but of a more tolerant spirit among men to follow after the close of this horrible war drama. The best blood of the brave sons of Royalists also has been poured in this Holy Grail of sacrifice. To-day the masses speak and think in but the terms of the Republic.

. . . . . .

I believe, too, that the mass of French people are longing for the time to come, growing out of the conclusion of the war, when there can be established a super-national authority as justiciar between the peoples. Everybody recognizes that treaties as heretofore made and observed between nations have proved a failure to prevent the recurrence of war. Radical innovations must be made in the method of dealing with international disputes. Some central authority, super-national in character, must be created by the consent of the Powers willing to recognize its decrees. Naturally, a police power must be given to that authority.

As an individual citizen of a country must surrender some of his natural liberties—those only to be used in a state of savagery—for the common good of society, that the weak may not be the prey of the strong, so nations themselves must abandon that kind of natural liberty (so championed by the doctrines of a Bernhardi and exemplified in this war by the militarists of Germany), for the future peace and security of the world.

Such, I believe, is the conviction that has come to the war-weary people of France, and on the very awfulness of this war, in its horrors and atrocities, they base their hope of realization for a permanent peace on some such plan, invoking the power of a super-national authority for its success.

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The most casual observer must realize that this war has

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indissolubly linked together the future aspirations of France and America. The ties that bind are peculiarly strong, and I do not recall, in the reading of history, where just such a relation between nations has before existed. The sojourn in France of our own boys in such numbers for so long a time, and their intimate contact with the people, will bring France much nearer to our shores. It is my hope and belief that the example set by the peoples of the two Republics will become the leaven which will permeate all Europe with the desire for greater national freedom and the attainment of higher ideals of human government.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

WM. G. SHARP.

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CHAPTER XVII

PEACE [1]

NOT only the prestige which our nation enjoys, but the very strength of the President's personality, had already made him the commanding figure long before the signing of Peace. The remarkable part which he had taken in shaping the course of the events of the war, beginning long before our own entrance, had deeply laid the foundations for his eminent position when he should come in person to France. Nearly a year before his arrival that trenchant reflector of independent public opinion, Mr. H. G. Wells, in commenting upon the lack of leadership in England, had written: [2] "The bulk of British opinion cannot go on being represented forever by President Wilson. We cannot always look to the Americans to express our ideas and do our work for democracy." Such a sentiment too I know existed in many of the higher circles of French thought.

Soon after the signing of the Armistice, it had fallen to my lot to make arrangements for the temporary residence of the members of the American Peace Mission.

President and Mrs. Wilson themselves had accepted the hospitality of Prince and Princess Murat, head of the distinguished family of that name, who put at the President's disposal their own handsome residence on the rue de Monceau during his first visit. In the year 1919, upon his return from America, he occupied the home of M. Francis de Croisset on the Place des Etats-Unis, which I had thought of taking for my Embassy when I arrived in Paris.

[1] This chapter is assembled from fragments written by Mr. Sharp for his closing chapter on "Peace," concerning which he left no special indications.

[2] In a series of articles published by the London *Daily Mail* in March, 1918.

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The choice of the home for the Peace Mission and its *entourage* fell upon the Hôtel Crillon; and in pursuance of instructions from the Department of State I secured its exclusive use.

Whatever may be charged to the account of red tape in the actions of the French Government had no application in this case. My request for the requisition of the hotel was made on Wednesday; on the following Saturday it was turned over, from top to bottom, for occupancy by this Mission. What matter if several hundred roomers were put out on the street to find accommodation as best they might, and that, too, at a time when all the other Allied Powers were seeking similar accommodations for their representatives at the Conference? "*C'est la guerre*" was sufficient excuse.

The next few days I found my hands full, being compelled to intercede with a fortunately tender-hearted hotel manager to make exceptions to the stern rule for immediate evacuation, in the cases of those whose situation rendered its enforcement too harsh. Even my good friend of long standing, M. Jules Cambon, former French Ambassador to the United States and at the time in the Ministry of War,[1] being temporarily disabled by an attack of pneumonia at the Crillon, had to write me a letter making a personal appeal to be allowed to retain his room.

As a man is wont to regard with feelings akin to affection the place which he has been permitted to call his home during times of stress, so I shall remember with sentimental regard the Hôtel Crillon, with its columned *façade* of the architecture of a century and a half ago. From the large front windows of my suite of rooms overlooking the Place de la Concorde, which I had occupied for some months at the beginning of the war, a sky-line lay before me to the south of unrivalled interest and

[1] Specially in charge of American affairs and the settlement of questions concerning General Pershing and the A.E.F. In a letter to me dated October 8, 1929, M. Jules Cambon wrote: "I was extremely happy to be able to serve once again the cause of our good relations with the United States. . . . I enjoyed the best and friendliest relations with Mr. Sharp, and was greatly saddened by the news of his death."—W.D.

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charm, embracing a wide sweep of some of the most notable structures in the world.

Extending from right to left, one may see, in succession with but a slight turn of the head, in a line sweeping away to the east, the towers of the Trocadéro, with its beautiful gardens sloping to the Seine; the Eiffel Tower, so lofty that its flag-pole is often lost in the impenetrable mists of a Paris fog—conceived as a folly of fancy, but in the crisis of the nation, to be the instrument for revealing untold secrets of the greatest value; the gilded dome, of such striking beauty, above the Tomb of Napoleon; the Chamber of Deputies, with its Grecian front, behind whose great columns events of historic interest have so often occurred; the twin-spired church of Ste. Clotilde; then the massive St. Sulpice with a *façade* so unlike any other I have known, and the keys of whose sweet-toned organ, touched by the wizard fingers of the great Widor, sent forth music such as I had never heard before; and finally, in the extreme east of my picture, above the tops of the trees of the garden of the Tuileries, the towers of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, which attracts, more than any other sacred edifice in France, the interest of the visitor to Paris.

If such were the monuments which greeted my eyes when looking from my window Seine-ward, the scene below was scarcely less interesting. There, at one glance, I could see the centre and the four corners of the Place de la Concorde. No spot in any other city in the world has been the scene of human action so reflective of the history of its people. Whether looked upon as the place of the execution of the unhappy King Louis XVI and his faithful Queen, Marie Antoinette; or the scene of the excesses of the Revolution; or the burning of the Palace of the Tuileries by maddened Communists at a later epoch; or as the place of many a gala fête or the exhibition of the trophies of a triumphant war, the spot possesses an unrivalled interest. Through its interesting highways, from all points of the compass, throbs the daily life of Paris.

Ruskin has deeply lamented the decadence of his beloved Venice, the crumbling of whose stones has measured the

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extent of her decline from her first proud position. More fortunate these monuments of Paris whose foundations but grow deeper with the lengthening of their traditions, and whose crests gain added beauty from the wondrous power of the rejuvenation of their environment.

The recent great conflict with its chapter of horrors, relieved only by so many examples of heroic sacrifices, had made it imperative that the statesmen of the different countries should adopt a course such that so heavy a price should not again have to be paid for peace. France in particular had exhibited throughout the war a backbone of steel which had never weakened, but on the contrary she had shown the greatest spirit in days that seemed the darkest.

She came to have a profound admiration for America on account of our help. Tangible evidence of this fraternal feeling towards Americans was shown immediately upon the arrival of President Wilson as he passed along the avenues of the French capital. Premier Clemenceau remarked to me: "I have never before witnessed such a demonstration in Paris." For my part, I may say that I have attended many public celebrations, but I never saw anywhere greater enthusiasm or larger crowds.

On Thursday, December 12, I had left Paris for Brest to meet President Wilson, accompanied by my son and a distinguished party including Miss Margaret Wilson, M. Georges Leygues, Minister of Marine, Admiral de Bon, M. André Tardieu, Commissioner for Franco-American Affairs, Generals Pershing and Bliss, and Admiral Benson. A very luxurious train, with salon cars and special apartments, had been put at my disposal by the French Government.

Arriving at Brest the next morning at about half past eleven, I went with my party immediately to the wharf to board a lighter. We must have presented a strange spectacle to the hundreds watching us along the waterfront, as we stood with our high silk hats on the deck of this boat which was very far from large, until we took refuge from the spray by entering the tiny cabin where our hats kept knocking against the ceiling.

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When finally the *George Washington* arrived we went immediately on board and were there greeted by the President and Mrs. Wilson, near whom we found the Secretary of State, French Ambassador Jusserand, former Ambassador Henry White, and Mr. John W. Davis, recently appointed American Ambassador to Great Britain. After we had all shaken hands with the President, M. André Tardieu was the spokesman for a speech to which the President replied in a very happy tone. He was, indeed, very affable, and his cordiality delighted the French who had been prepared to find in him a rather stern if not gruff sort of person. My good friend M. Georges Leygues profited by an opportunity to have a private word with me, expressing his genuine enthusiasm, confirming what was already well known to me, that he was a true friend of the United States.

At the landing place, President Wilson was greeted by the Mayor of Brest as well as by brass bands and a Socialist Delegation, to the accompaniment of the Presidential salute fired from the cannon of the fort, in which all the foreign warships in the harbour joined.

Driving through the streets of Brest, we found the city arrayed in gala attire. Breton peasant women in their native costumes, and the men with their old-fashioned and picturesque hats, mingled with soldiers and sailors both French and American.

At about half-past nine next day, Saturday, December 14, our special train reached the Gare du Bois de Boulogne, the station generally selected for such official arrivals and departures because of its natural beauty, situated as it is on the very edge of the Bois, and standing furthermore at one end of the broad and noble Avenue leading up to Napoleon's Arch of Triumph and thence down the Champs-Elysées to the Place de la Concorde. No first glimpse of Paris could be more enchanting, and nowhere could equal space be found for the gathering of holiday crowds to receive the distinguished guests of France.

The President immediately stepped out and greeted President and Madame Poincaré, Premier Clemenceau, the Members of the Cabinet and all high officials both French and foreign,

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who had gathered to do him honour and to form the magnificent cortège whose course through Paris has left undying memories with all who witnessed it.

The scene was, indeed, all the more imposing because of the unquestionably spontaneous nature of every gesture made by the crowd and every shout raised by those thousands of voices. I know how deeply the President was touched by the tributes paid to him on that day, which certainly counted among the busiest as well as the happiest in his official life. For not only was the exchange of visits with the President of the Republic immediately necessary, in accordance with the etiquette established by the French Protocol on such occasions, but that very day was the date fixed for the banquet given in his honour by the President of the French Republic, at which were delivered the first of the speeches marking President Wilson's mission to France, and in the afternoon at half-past three there was a Labour Parade in the President's honour, followed by the reception of a delegation of Socialist Members of the Chamber of Deputies, and a speech made by them.

I may here remark that this episode, which in the sequel gave rise to some criticism as a spontaneous occurrence which might have been avoided, it being even intimated in some quarters that the President should have refused to receive them for fear of "misunderstandings," was, as a matter of fact, inscribed in the programme drawn up in writing four days in advance of the President's arrival. It indicated no "espousal of Socialist policies," as some went so far as to allege, but it was highly symbolical of the President's love for the people and his constant thought for them in all his plans for Peace. I believe that the people of France as a whole understood this well.

Another feature inscribed on that programme dated December 10, awaiting the President's arrival, was a visit to Northern France and Belgium occupying the dates of December 26 to 28 inclusive. Further misunderstandings, or rather misinterpretations, arose over a change in this detail.

The President perfectly realized the difficulties of his position in Europe. He was to take his first direct personal

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contact with statesmen who already knew each other intimately through the various Inter-Allied Conferences which had so frequently been held. Having known them only by correspondence, or through reports concerning them, he was now to converse with them to reach verbally decisions which, when put in writing, would make or unmake the Peace won by heroic achievement and unparalleled sufferings. The prime consideration for him was to get to know the psychology of these men in close informal gatherings before the official meetings should begin. Compared with this, the visit to the ravaged and devastated regions, for which he had felt so strongly and concerning which he had protested so energetically to Germany down to the very signing of the Armistice, might well wait. He both wished and intended to visit them. But he knew of their condition by the frequent and ample reports he had been reading throughout the war. The gesture which his heart commanded him to make was therefore of a less urgent nature than the necessity for him to know the men who were to decide with him how to assure future safety for those regions.[1]

The way in which these plain and logical facts were distorted brought the first evidence of a campaign organized to do the President harm in the public eye. It was asserted that he refused to visit the scenes of desolation from fear that they might prejudice him against Germany, and lead him to make conditions too drastic for her liking. The proof of the injustice of the charge brought against him was that when informed by the Embassy of the depth of feeling on the subject and the use being made of it, he immediately altered his personal plans and made not one but two visits, one to Rheims, and another of longer duration and wider extent through the devastated regions.

Tuesday, December 17, was the date fixed for the dinner given by Mrs. Sharp and myself for the President and Mrs.

[1] M. André Tardieu has called attention to the importance of the private conversations held in Paris in December, as justifying even the delay of two months which passed between the signing of the Armistice and the opening of the Conference on January 12. See *La Paix*, Ch. III, Div. III, p. 117.

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Wilson, followed by a reception to which all the American members of the Peace Commission were invited, together with the members of the French Government and leading statesmen and members of Parliament. Of course the presence, at such a function, in a foreign capital, of a President of the United States during his tenure of office, gave it a character as unique as it was unprecedented.

Certainly at no other time since the beginning of my mission had there been at the Embassy a social function of this importance. The party at dinner included notably, in addition to President and Madame Poincaré: Premier Clemenceau; the British, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish Ambassadors to France and their wives; the President of the Senate, M. Antonin Dubost; the President of the Chamber and Madame Paul Deschanel; the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Madame Pichon; the Minister of Marine and Madame Leygues; Marshal and Madame Joffre; Marshal and Madame Foch; General Pershing; Marshal Pétain; the Secretary of State and Mrs. Lansing; French Ambassador and Madame Jusserand; Miss Margaret Wilson; Colonel and Mrs. House; former Ambassador Henry White; General Bliss; General Harts; Admiral and Mrs. Benson; and Mrs. Gordon Auchincloss, daughter of Colonel House, one of the youngest women in the Peace party at the Conference, her husband being with Colonel House as Special Assistant.

In addition to the dinner guests, comprising the dignitaries whom I have mentioned, five hundred other guests were bidden, representative of the diplomatic and social life of Paris, including my own Embassy staff and such distinguished foreigners as M. Gabriel Hanotaux, former Cabinet Minister and President of the France-Amérique Society; M. Alexandre Millerand, the former Minister of War, who was soon after to be appointed French High Commissioner in Alsace and Lorraine and who was later elected President of the Republic; M. Maurice Herbette of the Foreign Office, since appointed French Ambassador to Belgium; the Serbian Minister to France and Madame Vesnitch; the Norwegian Minister to France and Baroness Wedel-Jarlsberg; etc.

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Gowns and jewels of great splendour were worn on that occasion for one of the first times since the beginning of the war. With that thoughtfulness which the officials of the municipality of Paris constantly showed to me, directions unasked by me had been given to turn on the great search-lights at the top of the Eiffel Tower, which stands across the Seine near by, directly in line with the Avenue d'Eylau. During the arrival and departure of our noteworthy guests, these lights were directed down the avenue, and darkness was turned into the light of day. I am sure that never before had this thoroughfare received such distinction.

No less impressive than President Wilson's arrival was the scene which I witnessed on February 14 when the President, in a plenary session of the Conference, nearly all the nations of the earth being represented, gave forth the articles agreed upon in reference to the establishment of the League of Nations. That speech was epochal and left a lasting memory with all who heard it. Even if I had not previously known, as I so well did, the value which would attach to President Wilson's presence in Paris, I could not have failed from that moment to feel the greatest confidence in his wisdom and courage in dealing with the all-important questions before the Peace Conference.

To all carpers who complained that the President should never have come to Paris, I could put the question: How did they expect America to be represented otherwise? We have in America no Cabinet Member equivalent to the European Premier or President of the Council, to represent us at a conference where such dignitaries, and not the accredited Ambassadors, were to be the plenipotentiaries. Such a detail may not count for much among us, but it does have weight in European eyes. Yet that was not the only question which arose, and not the most important one. Secondly it must be asked: How would information of these complicated proceedings have reached our Chief of State in Washington? Not only were the problems raised the most highly involved which the world had ever been called upon to deal with, but they were so new that fresh impressions and additional informa-

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tion were coming in at every moment. If the Transatlantic cables and the resources of wireless transmission had been multiplied tenfold, they would still not have sufficed to carry such voluminous reports to Washington, and the study of them in such form to reach swift and irrevocable decisions would have been beyond the powers of any man.

The European statesmen had the advantage of being in constant touch with their Cabinets and their Chiefs of State. M. Clemenceau could call a Cabinet meeting at any time, and his telephone put him in immediate communication with his colleagues or with President Poincaré. The same was true of the telephone for the British, Belgian, and Italian delegates. Furthermore, if Mr. Lloyd George or Signor Orlando found it necessary to call a Cabinet meeting to discuss some delicate point before their country was committed, they could readily find a pretext for a short journey home, during which the Conference could be engaged on other matters without a formal meeting for a few days.

All these advantages would obviously have been denied to any Chief American delegate appointed by the President and remaining responsible to him. And as for constant trips to America to report upon the proceedings and secure instructions, we all know what happened when President Wilson felt compelled to take contact with the American public, though only once.[1]

It was a situation in which he saw no alternative but to take the responsibilities directly on his own shoulders, and having done this he was fearless as in all things when his mind was made up on a course. Those who criticized him in the sequel, for any difficulties which may have arisen through his presence in Paris, would do well to give some moments of thought to

[1] "The President's absence from February 15 to March 14 was highly perilous for his cause. Grave reasons for it indeed existed, but the results were serious. . . . When he returned he found his whole programme side-tracked, and at the same time he had still further to weaken his position by asking for American amendments to the Covenant in order to unify the support behind him at home." Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, Chapter XXV.

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those graver and more far-reaching complications which would have become inevitable if he had not been in Paris.[1]

There was, indeed, no parallel in history for a Conference of so extensive and so complicated a nature. Looking back through the events in Europe for slightly over a century, one could find only three Conferences which might be taken as furnishing any sort of precedent. There had been the Congress of Vienna, held from November 1, 1814, to June 9, 1815, to reorganize Europe subsequent to the Napoleonic Wars; there had been the Congress of Paris, February 25 to April 16, 1856, after the Crimean War; and there had been the Congress of Berlin, June 13 to July 13, 1878, subsequent to the Russo-Turkish War, called by Germany to settle the affairs of the Orient.

Of the three, only the Congress of Vienna could be compared with the Conference to deal with the consequences of the 1914–1918 World War, by the amplitude of the problems raised and the number of small as well as great States represented. There were at Vienna no less than three different groups of Powers. First came the eight signatories of the Treaty of Paris of May 30, 1814: Austria, France, Great Britain, Portugal, Prussia, Russia, Spain, Sweden—and of these Spain eventually refused to sign the final act. Next came all the non-signatory States parties to the war; and finally the German States whose Constitution was to be carried out. It will thus be seen that a similarity could be found there, although no real parallel was furnished; and one might also note the brilliant names chronicled among the representatives of the Powers—Metternich and Talleyrand, and Lord Castlereagh, later replaced by the Duke of Wellington.

But it is to be noted that at the 1814–1815 Congress, the Treaty signed in Paris four months prior to its opening served as basis for the discussions. The same was true of

[1] "Four days after the Commission landed at Brest I had a long conference with Colonel House, on matters pertaining to the approaching negotiations, during which he informed me that there was a determined effort being made by the European statesmen to induce the President to sit at the peace table." Robert Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations*, Ch. II, pp. 24–25.

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the two subsequent Congresses I have named. The Congress of Paris, in which Count Walewski was the central figure, had as its basis the Protocol signed at Vienna February 1, 1854, three weeks and a half prior to the opening; and the Congress of Berlin, which brought Bismarck and Disraeli into opposition, had as its basis of discussions the Treaty of San Stefano, signed three months before, on March 3, 1878.

Now, no such general and concerted Treaty stipulations, properly speaking, could be cited as basis for the discussions to be held in Paris and in Versailles at the close of the World War. There had been not a preliminary Treaty signed but an Armistice concluded successively with the four enemy Powers, Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, Germany; and on the Allied side there was as a collective declaration, concerted and agreed upon by all the parties concerned, the common Declaration of the European Allies in reply to President Wilson's Note asking to know their War aims: and this supplied a programme rather than a formal basis for debates at the Conference, since the various Armistice stipulations had to be furthermore taken strictly into account. At the root of the whole lay the Fourteen Points.

For the above reasons alone, the necessity for the presence in Paris of the President of the United States, as the only person authorized by our Constitution to negotiate Treaties,[1] appeared as the sole means for handling an involved situation which would have become inextricable, if disadvantages had been added on our side such as separation by the entire stretch of the Atlantic, and the necessity to commit all explanations, inquiries, and instructions, to writing.

The history of the Conference will be written by others, in the light of the records kept and the memories of those who took an active part in the whole. I had been called to America

[1] "The Constitution of the United States confides to the President the absolute right of conducting the foreign relations of the Republic. . . . Many Americans, some of whom are national legislators and solicitous about the Constitution, seem to have ignored or to have forgotten this delegation of exclusive authority, with the result that they have condemned the President in intemperate language for exercising this executive right." Robert Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations*, Chapter I, pp. 6–7.

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by the grave illness and death of my brother, George W. Sharp, a few days before Christmas, returning to my post only on the 1st of February, and having resolved to withdraw from it in April, for reasons which I will shortly state. Nevertheless, there were aspects about which I would say my word, having been in a position to observe what was occurring at that critical period in the affairs of the world.

If all was not destined to go smoothly with the Conference, it was not from lack of goodwill shown on many sides or of very great efforts exerted by all.[1] Early in January, attacks began to be made in certain organs of the Paris Press against the President's policy, sometimes going to an extent and being couched in such terms as were unprecedented, I was told, in editorials on a visiting foreign Chief of State. This could not facilitate the reaching of an agreement, where questions so numerous and so complicated, with so many divergent interests, were concerned.

The occasion for these attacks was not always very clear, since points touched upon were sometimes extraneous to matters under discussion, and I even noticed criticisms often passed upon President Wilson for views which I knew not to be his. But furthermore, there were not lacking persons, usually of a wide and accurate scope of information, who assured me that there was a concerted and possibly interested movement to instigate these attacks and to influence accordingly the outcome of the Peace Conference. There were particularly certain periods when this was very marked, notably in February and in April. Not only was grave concern then revealed as to the proceedings of the Conference and the outcome to be foreseen, but simultaneous opposition against the President appeared at Washington, where the

[1] "Various historians, especially those writing from an American point of view, have presented the Peace Conference as though it were a clear-cut conflict between two sets of ideals, personified by Clemenceau on the one hand and Wilson on the other. . . . In reality the Peace Conference was not nearly so simple. It was not so much a duel as a general *mêlée*, in which the representatives of each nation struggled to secure endorsement for their particular methods of ensuring the peace." House-Seymour, Vol. IV, Chapter XI.

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articles published in the Paris Press were being actively exploited.

It was my firm conviction that it was this campaign which exercised its effect upon public opinion in France, and not public opinion itself which turned spontaneously against the President of the United States, who had crossed the ocean to continue and conclude his effort of years to establish world-peace on a sound and lasting basis. At the beginning of the year, it had been evident that French public opinion was whole-heartedly in support of the President. By the middle of March a change was noticeable in the public, but the majority of French opinion was still with him. At the time, I remarked as significant, in several papers of wide circulation and considerable importance, the tendency to pay compliments to President Wilson in one column while attacking him in another.

The obstacles put in the way of the proceedings were sometimes of a surprising nature. I may mention as one detail that M. Jules Cambon was unsuccessful in his efforts to obtain an authorized and officially recognized text of a translation into French of President Wilson's Fourteen Principles on which the greater part of the debates turned.[1] As far as I know, no such official text was ever made available either to the Peace Conference or to the French Parliament itself.

The Press criticisms of President Wilson which became frequent early in February subsided somewhat, as if from inanition, in the latter half of that month. But it was then during his brief visit home, that one might note the profit to which the attacks of the French Press were being turned in Washington by political adversaries of the President. This situation as it developed in our Senate was watched particularly closely by the Washington correspondent of

[1] "My duty was plain. Mr. Wilson, when sending the American Army over to us, had laid down the well-known 14 points. Should we be ready to stop the battle as soon as the Germans submitted to those various points? If I had refused to answer affirmatively, I should have come back upon my word and the country would have risen up against me unanimously, while our soldiers would have disavowed me, and they would have been quite right." Georges Clemenceau, *Grandeurs et misères d'une victoire*, p. 97.

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L'Echo de Paris, who kept French readers fully informed of the opposition to the League being organized in the United States. On February 25 this paper announced that a number of Republican leaders were to make addresses throughout the country, fighting the League and demanding a return to "traditional Americanism," although the League had been given the support of ex-President William H. Taft.[1]

On March 4 it was the turn of *Le Matin* to draw attention to the opposition against the League in America, supplementing the report published the previous day of Senator Lodge's speech in the Senate saying that before twelve months had passed, the very nations which had signed the project for the League would be quarrelling to know what it meant.

With all this, concern was expressed over the proceedings of the Conference itself,[2] particularly from the point of view of the damages from Germany which should devolve to France's share; and here anyone cognizant of France's efforts and her sacrifices could not but be in sympathy with much that was written.

L'Action Française published on February 25 an article by M. Charles Maurras drawing attention to the statement of an American economist according to which America would lose 4·5% of her wealth, England 32%, and France 62% as

[1] The amendments to the draft for the League Covenant proposed by ex-President Taft and Mr. Elihu Root, in March, 1919, are given by Joseph P. Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson As I Knew Him*, Chapter XXXVI and Appendix. Mr. Tumulty comments: "A comparison of the suggestions presented by Mr. Taft and Mr. Root with the existing Covenant of the League of Nations will readily convince any person desiring to reach the truth of the matter that all the material amendments proposed by these eminent Republicans which had any essential bearing on the business in hand were embodied in the Covenant of the League."

[2] "The higher interests of the negotiations necessitated discretion. This was the decision of the heads of governments." André Tardieu, *La Paix*, Chapter III, Div. III, p. 123. "It is often objected that if the public had been kept informed, France would not have been compelled always to yield before her Allies. I set this objection aside, because it is not true that France always had to yield, on the contrary she generally obtained satisfaction. On the other hand, it is certain that this silence did harm to the Treaty in the opinion of the public." Id. Chapter III, Div. III, p. 125. See also Chapter XII, pp. 468 *et seq.*

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their respective sacrifices attributable to the war; figures which had been confirmed by the French Deputy, M. Pierre Rameil. M. Maurras argued that an indemnity of a thousand billions collected from Germany should consequently be divided in this proportion. On all sides, he said, people in France were asking: "Why should not German capital pay first?"

President Wilson's return from America was warmly applauded by *Le Gaulois*, which declared on March 15 that he was "all the more welcome because he had proclaimed in America principles of international policy which have dispersed the anxiety sometimes caused by his attitude during the first part of the Conference."

It was to be observed on March 28 that the Paris papers published the President's statement about the League of Nations almost without comment. On that day, *Le Matin* complained of the slowness of the Big Four as well as the Ten, in reaching solutions, and *L'Echo de Paris* remarked that "even to write the peace is not to make it."

The Paris Press of April 5 was particularly significant from the dual point of view of the grave concern being felt in France and the concerted opposition to the President in Washington.

Notably "Pertinax," writing in *L'Echo de Paris*, said that the League of Nations was lying in pieces on the floors of the Crillon. Two opposed conceptions of peace were in presence; one mercantile and ideological, the other realist and truly humane. It would be better for the Four to say that they were unable to agree[1] and would refer the matter

[1] "I must first dispose of the legend according to which any one of these three men (Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George) made the others his dupes. It was said in France that Clemenceau had been the dupe of Wilson and Lloyd George; in America, that Wilson had been the puppet of Lloyd George; in England, Mr. Keynes wrote that Clemenceau alone had ruled the game. This puerile and contradictory explanation must be left aside, as convenient for politicians alone. None of the three Chiefs deserved so much honour or so much indignity. The truth is that from the first day to the very last, they all debated on an equal footing, greatly desiring to reach an agreement." André Tardieu, *La Paix*, Chapter III, Div. III, p. 113.

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to their Parliaments. The French were confident in the verdict of the Chambers of London, Washington, and Paris.

It was on this same day, that *L'Echo de Paris* published a long telegram from its Washington correspondent, discussing the stand taken by Mr. Root and Mr. Hitchcock about the amendments to the League of Nations Pact.[1]

On April 12, *Le Matin* cast upon the United States the entire blame for all delays in the Peace Preliminaries, and emphasis was laid upon the fact that although there still appeared to be doubts as to the figures of Germany's debts to the Allies, exact data were not lacking. France had lost Frs. 316,000,000,000 or Frs. 10,000 per capita; England had spent something like Frs. 125,000,000,000 or about Frs. 3,000 per capita; the United States had spent Frs. 100,000,000,000, or Frs. 900 per capita. The conclusions reached were that entirely too much leniency was being shown to Germany, and it was stated that profound unrest was being caused in France by the slowness of the Council and the silence of the Four as to their work. A front-page cartoon showed a diplomat in the office of a chief of police, engaged in a conversation as follows: "You would like to recover your stolen money?" "I should like to very much." "What is the amount of the theft?" "Oh! I don't dare tell!"

By the time April 14 came, the papers pretty well agreed that the American Delegation must bear the responsibility for setting aside the propositions of the French.[2]

[1] Joseph N. Tumulty quotes Isaiah Bowman, Chief Territorial Adviser of the Peace Commission, as recalling "that President Wilson has been charged on the one hand with outrageous concessions to the Allies and on the other hand that he had always been soft with the Germans." *Woodrow Wilson as I Knew Him*, Chapter XXXVII.

[2] "Here Wilson had been scoffed at and cursed because he deserted his programme; certainly, there is not the slightest similarity between the Fourteen Points and the Peace of Versailles and St. Germain, but it is forgotten now that Wilson no longer had the power to enforce his will against the three others. . . . He could have broken off proceedings and left. He certainly could have done so, but would the chaos have been any less?" *In the World War*, Count Ottokar Czernin, London, 1919, Chapter XII.

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L'Echo de Paris published cabled reports from Washington informing the French public of the continued dissatisfaction of the Republican Party, led by Senator Lodge, over the developments of the League of Nations. One of these telegrams mentioned that President Wilson might withdraw from the Conference; the *George Washington* was being held in readiness for himself and his party at Brest; this was interpreted as being nothing less than "an attempt at intimidation."[1]

On April 12, the Socialist organ *Le Populaire* had, on the other hand, devoted six columns of its first page to articles in praise of President Wilson, and especially of his "move" in commanding the *George Washington* to be held in readiness. This was stated to suggest that President Wilson intended to maintain his programme of a democratic peace in the face of opposition, or to withdraw from the Council of Four rather than witness any violation of his solemn word as given to the Peoples. This, said *Le Populaire*, was but another logical expression of his nobility of purpose, for he remained the sole hope of the Peoples.

But meanwhile at least the future of the League of Nations had been assured, whatever its critics might have to say about it. That crisis had come and passed, two full months before, although the inside story, as told me at the time, came out only in the sequel, and fragmentarily. The part played by Mr. Oscar Straus, of New York, in particular, does not yet seem to be generally known.

I profited by a conversation which I held with him in

[1] "As a prelude to acceptance of the brutal fact that they must agree, every one of the 'Big Four' threatened to quit the Conference." Winston Churchill, *The Aftermath*, Chapter X. "The sending of this telegram (*i.e.* of April 7 relative to the *George Washington*) has been frequently represented as an effective threat, which immediately reduced the French and British to an attitude of abject submission to American demands, and thus proved to be a turning-point in the Conference. Nothing of the sort is apparent in the records. No further change of importance was made in the Reparations draft, and it was Mr. Wilson and not the French or British who made concessions during the following four days, in the discussions of the Saar and Rhinelands." House-Seymour, Vol. IV, Chapter XI.

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Washington, in 1921, to secure confirmation of what he had said to me in Paris more than two years previously.

Memorandum by Mr. Sharp.

Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.
December 16, 1921.

In conversation at the breakfast table this morning with Mr. Oscar Straus of New York, he again told me the story of his own part in regard to saving the League of Nations provisions at Paris, in substantially the following words:

"I saw Colonel House a few days before the final announcement that the League of Nations had been adopted, the announcement being made by President Wilson in the Hall of the Clock on the 14th of February, 1919. When I saw Mr. House it must have been within forty-eight hours of that time. He said to me, 'The League of Nations is on the rocks!' I said to him, 'Will you permit me to see Léon Bourgeois whom I have known for many years as a friend of International Peace?' Mr. House said, 'We would welcome any such help.' I then quickly made an appointment with M. Léon Bourgeois, using the good offices of my friend Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, also a man friendly to International Peace. Together we had a talk with M. Bourgeois and I said to him, in answer to his declaration that he favoured the establishment of an international army, that that would be impossible, and I asked him if he would not rather have the adoption of the League of Nations than the failure of everything looking to International Peace and stability. M. Bourgeois replied, that with such an alternative he personally would certainly favour the adoption of the principles of the League of Nations, but that he would have to consult Clemenceau and the Committee himself. This was done, and a report came back that while certain qualifications would be necessitated upon the principles involved, that the League of Nations would be accepted, Clemenceau giving his word to that effect. I then promptly telephoned Mr. House that the League of Nations was 'off the rocks.' Clemenceau later seeing me said to me then, 'You see I have kept my word.'"

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It was only much later that M. André Tardieu published his interesting book, *The Truth about the Peace Treaty*, which I had the good fortune to read in America. In a very masterly way he dealt with the complex conditions immediately following the close of the war. Added weight was, of course, attached to the value which M. Tardieu's opinions would have had for their own sake, because of the introduction which M. Clemenceau wrote, unconsciously furnishing to the reader an accurate pen-picture of himself in characteristically virile phrases—truths hewn out with an axe. No one familiar with M. Clemenceau's remarkable make-up, and the commanding part which he played in the Great War and later in framing the Treaty, could fail to realize that M. Tardieu had become in reality the spokesman of M. Clemenceau. But the author had written the book with an intimate personal knowledge of facts.

When coming to the Armistice and all the events that led up to it, M. Tardieu paid to President Wilson the high degree of praise which the far-reaching results of the President's achievement must ever accord him. That notable service enabled Marshal Foch to declare: "Our aims being accomplished, no one has the right to shed another drop of blood." And M. Tardieu closed this chapter with the words: "The Armistice marked the capitulation of the enemy, a capitulation which was an unconditional surrender."

But it was when M. Tardieu dealt with the theme of "The Peace Conference" that his readers were permitted to know, for the first time—and that from the pen of one who, better than any other person on the French side, was in a position to state the facts—the inside secrets of the deliberations of the noted figures who finally shaped the conclusions into form. What might not the Paris Press, which at times had been so impatient and critical, merely conjecturing as to the nature of these conferences and the decisions arrived at, have given to secure advance sheets of M. Tardieu's book!

At no time wavering in his loyal devotion to the Treaty, and expressing full confidence in the motives of those who framed it, M. Tardieu yet rarely used the soft pedal when

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vigorous language was needed to deal with men or with things. Absorbing as was the interest of the story itself, I found it still more remarkable as furnishing a keen analysis of the human traits of the men who composed this distinguished triumvirate of Treaty makers. Of course such an account must deal almost exclusively with M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George, and President Wilson. Replete with documentary matter bearing upon their deliberations, including copious quotations from statements made by these conferees, the author vividly revealed the attitude of this or that one among the chief actors. Having myself enjoyed a personal and indeed cordial acquaintance with these chief characters, I can vouch for the fidelity and the true-to-nature cast of these living actors in the great drama presented by M. Tardieu.

For myself, the part I had been called upon to play in France had come to an end on the evening of April 14, 1919, when I left Paris to board the *Leviathan* at Brest, returning home with my wife and children.

It was inevitably with some feeling of sadness that I said farewell to the country for which all my life I had felt such a genuine admiration, and which I had been so very happy to serve to the utmost of my abilities in years which history will reckon among those of her greatest need for friends, but at the same time of her utmost display of the many great qualities for which France has been known to the civilized world throughout the centuries. And I would say that never in all my life have I been more deeply touched than by the sight of the number of friends, including many high officials, who had gathered at the Montparnasse station in Paris to bid me good-bye in spite of the very inclement weather.

My resignation, which had been a matter of public knowledge for some two months, had in fact been tendered to President Wilson exactly five months before.

On November 14, 1918, the third day after the signing of the Armistice, I had written privately to the President, explaining the reasons of a personal nature which compelled me to relinquish the post of American Ambassador to France. Both my health and my means had suffered to an extent upon

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which I had no desire to insist, although I was anxious to avoid causing any embarrassment to the President. It was for this reason that no announcement was made until February 14, 1918, when by common agreement with President Wilson the formal letters which we had exchanged in December, just before my hurried visit home to the bedside of my dying brother, were made public.

Ambassador Sharp to President Wilson.

Paris, *November* 14, 1918.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

The momentous events occurring within the past week have hastened the coming of a time to which I have long looked forward, as determining me to tender to you my resignation from the post with which you honored me and which I have filled during now four years.

Beginning my services almost coincident with the breaking out of the war, I have consistently thought to end them approximately with its close. Now that that time has come, I have not altered my mind from my original purpose. I would be pleased, therefore, if you would kindly accept my resignation, to take effect soon after the beginning of the coming New Year—say at some time within the month of February.

Regretting for many reasons, as I shall, to lay down the work which, arduous at times though it has been, nevertheless has always been agreeable to me on account of its pleasing associations and the important character of its duties, yet, after such a long absence from home, I feel that I must now give my attention to my business affairs. I am led to believe that by the time set for my departure, we shall all have the satisfaction of seeing at least the most important of the large questions settled by the Peace Conference.

The acquiescence in principle by all the Allies, as well as by the Central Powers, to the fourteen conditions enunciated by you last January has indeed done much to prepare the way for the solution of such questions. But I am persuaded that if the assurance of a lasting peace is sought, then emphatically the condition imposed in No. 4 calling for a reduction of

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national armaments—they should ultimately cease to exist except for enforcing domestic order—and the principle of the League of Nations involved in No. 14 must be written in ineffaceable letters in the Treaty. These alone can guarantee the performance of all the other conditions so wisely laid down by you for governing the future relations of peoples toward each other.

I cannot thus tender my resignation—that you may have sufficient time in which to consider the selection of my successor—without expressing to you my deep appreciation for the words of confidence and goodwill which you have sent over to me. They have been very precious to me, and have afforded that kind of encouragement that every man needs at times in order to go ahead with the desired assurance.

I must also express to you my admiration for the remarkable vision displayed by you from the very beginning of the war, in forecasting the events which have so transformed old conditions, and for the high order of constructive ability which you have shown in shaping such events to their final fruition. You have made the world your debtor as no other man in history.

With every good wish for the unbounded success of all your undertakings, and for the vouchsafing to you of good health for the completion of the high mission for which Providence has appointed you, I am, believe me, my dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

Telegram from President Wilson to the Ambassador.

Washington, *November* 30, 1918.

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR,
Paris.

President sends you following: "Thank you very much for your message. I hope when I reach the other side to tell you how much I have appreciated your uniform co-operation. It is delightful to rejoice together over the great consummation."

LANSING.

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Ambassador Sharp to President Wilson.

Paris, *December* 19, 1918.

THE PRESIDENT,
Palais Murat,
rue Monceau,
Paris.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

Referring to my letter written to you in November soon after the signing of the Armistice, in which I asked you to accept my resignation as Ambassador to France, to take effect at some date early in the coming year, I wish now to renew in a more formal manner that request. A long absence from my business affairs seemed to make such action wise, but, as I then wrote you, only the ending of the war finally prompted me to tender my resignation.

It has always been my consistent purpose to serve at my post until the coming of that long hoped-for event. Subject to your own desires in the matter, however, it will be agreeable to me to remain in charge of this mission until my successor is appointed and ready to assume his duties.

All through a period of unusually trying conditions, into which the events of a century seem to have been crowded, I have deeply appreciated the constant support of our Government at Washington. Your own great part in shaping the destiny of those far-reaching events[1] has given a new importance—one already decreed to be permanent—to American diplomacy abroad, and I must express to you my grateful recognition of the aid which it has brought to me in meeting the problems of the work of this Embassy. It has been such as to make Americans hold higher their heads in just pride of their country.

While a rest from such exacting labors will have its com-

[1] "It is an undeniable fact that President Wilson did more than anyone else to determine the statutes of the New Europe, by the final authority of his military help as well as by the external power of a word going beyond the traditions of the past." Georges Clemenceau, *Grandeurs et misères d'une victoire*, p. 140.

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pensation for me, yet it is with feelings of sincere regret that I sever my relations with a country whose Government has been so helpful and generous to me and this quite as much before our entrance into the war as afterwards. For the masses of its people I came long ago to have a warm affection born of an understanding of their real qualities of mind and heart. As such traits of character made France so heroic in her time of stress and sacrifice, so now in the hour of victory and the peace to follow they will serve to knit together all the more closely the common interests of our two peoples.

Will you please accept, Mr. President, my earnest thanks for the confidence which you have reposed in me, and my best wishes for the success of your administration in the important work with which it is charged.

Very sincerely yours,

WM. G. SHARP.

President Wilson to Ambassador Sharp.

The President of the United States
of America,
Paris, *December* 21, 1918.

MY DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR:

In view of what you have so fully explained to me with regard to the circumstances which make you feel it your duty to retire from your present post and give your close personal attention to business affairs which depend upon you, I cannot in conscience refuse to accept your resignation as Ambassador of the United States to the Government of France, and I do so with the understanding that the resignation is to take effect when your successor qualifies.

I am sincerely obliged to you that you are willing to make this arrangement and to remain in France until your successor can actually take your place. It is an arrangement which relieves me of a good deal of anxiety, because I should not wish the highly important post in Paris to be vacant for even a short time.

Let me tell you again how highly I have valued the unusual services which you have rendered our government. They

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have at every turn of the critical events of recent years been of the highest value, and it has been a source of confidence and of strength to feel that we had such a representative here. I am expressing not only my personal feeling but the feeling of all those who have been familiar with your services here. You are certainly entitled to your release, and I assure you that you carry with you the affectionate regard and confidence of those who have had the pleasure of being your co-laborers in our Government.

Cordially and sincerely yours,
WOODROW WILSON.

Acting Secretary Polk to Ambassador Sharp.

Washington,
February 18, 4 P.M.

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
Paris.

The President having selected Hugh C. Wallace of Tacoma, Washington, as your successor, you will please obtain the agreement of the French Government to his appointment. Mr. Wallace is 56 years of age, he has always been a student of foreign affairs and has rendered distinguished service to the Government of the United States in several important matters of an international character.

POLK,
Acting Secretary of State.

Ambassador Sharp to the State Department.

Paris, *February* 20, 1919.

SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington.

This afternoon I took up in person with M. Pichon at the Foreign Office the subject of securing the consent of the French Government to the selection of Mr. Hugh Wallace as my successor, taking at the same time the opportunity warmly to commend him for the post. M. Pichon said that merely as a matter of form he would have to take the matter up with the President of the Republic, but would give me his answer

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later this evening or in the morning. Of course there will be no difficulty whatever.

I am planning to remain in Paris in charge of this Mission until within a few days before the arrival of Mr. Wallace. Discussing the matter with the President before his departure I told him that I would set the date of my leaving some time in April.

SHARP.

Foreign Minister Pichon to Ambassador Sharp.

FRENCH REPUBLIC,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

MR. AMBASSADOR:

You have been kind enough, under date of February 20th, and in accordance with instructions received from your Government, to express the desire of obtaining the consent of the Government of the Republic for the appointment of Mr. Hugh C. Wallace, who has been designated to be your successor at the Embassy of the United States at Paris.

The Government of the Republic learns with great regret the official announcement of your departure. It cannot forget the tragic circumstances which prevailed at the time when Your Excellency assumed his diplomatic functions in France, and still less the distinguished manner in which Your Excellency carried them through, during these four years of war when the noble American Republic, after giving to France her invaluable moral support and the powerful help of her good-will, came to take her place beside her and fought with heroism for the same cause. The French Government has deeply appreciated the tact, the competency, the sympathy, and the spirit of inter-Allied "entente" of which Your Excellency has shown innumerable proofs. The Republic will keep a grateful remembrance of these, and I am happy to be its official interpreter to express such sentiments.

The personality designed by your Government to be at the head of the Embassy in France will be received with all the attention and friendship that the representative of the United States can always be assured to find in Lafayette's country.

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The French Government hastens to give its consent to the appointment of Mr. Hugh Wallace, whose eminent qualities you have been kind enough to tell me.

Kindly accept, Mr. Ambassador, the assurances of my high consideration and my own devoted sentiments,

Paris, *February* 21, 1919. S. PICHON.

French Ambassador Jusserand to Ambassador Sharp.

28, Avenue du Président Wilson,
Paris, *February* 17, 1919.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND:

I am greatly beholden to the American Club for the honor of their invitation and I should have been very happy to celebrate in their company this grand anniversary, dearer, as years pass, to every American and every French heart. Most unfortunately for me an engagement which I cannot waive will prevent my being present.

As I shall be at the same moment in military company we shall all associate ourselves in thought with our American friends, honoring the memory of the great man who first led American and French troops to victory: both our countries shall ever rejoice that what the ancestors had done has been renewed by the descendants, with the same valor, the same self-sacrifice, the same warmth of affection between our compatriots. May that affection, of so much value to our two countries, grow and continue till the end of time.

Allow me, my dear Colleague, to add a word, and express our heartfelt regret at your impending departure. Your souvenir will prove a lasting one among us; all those who have seen you and heard you, or know of your work and sympathy through those dark years, are unanimous in your praise and in the expression of their gratitude.

My wife joins me in assuring Mrs. Sharp and yourself that our good wishes will follow you to America where we hope to see you—they will follow you indeed wherever you go.

Believe me with my best regards,
Sincerely yours,
JUSSERAND.

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General Pershing to Ambassador Sharp.

American Expeditionary Forces,
Office of the Commander-in-Chief,
France, *April* 7, 1919.

HONORABLE WILLIAM G. SHARP,
American Embassy,
Paris.

MY DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR:

I must apologize for not having answered your letter of March 24th sooner, but can only plead my constant tours of inspection, which make it hard for me to keep up with my personal correspondence. I trust, however, that the photograph which I enclose herewith will cause you to excuse my belated reply.

I hope that I may have the pleasure of seeing you before your departure from France, but if I am not fortunate enough to have such an opportunity, may I tell you how much I have appreciated your consistent friendship and your unfailing support since the arrival of the first members of the American Expeditionary Forces in France. It is with a sincere feeling of personal regret that I see you leave your post, which you have filled so ably during the arduous days of the war. I shall always treasure your co-operation and counsel, and shall hope that good fortune will permit me to meet you often in the States.

Please extend to Mrs. Sharp my very best regards. Her wise leadership and her dignified and friendly attitude toward all Americans, especially of the Army, will always be remembered by those of us who have had the honor to know her.

With kindest personal regards to yourself and your family, I am,

Sincerely yours,
JOHN J. PERSHING.

Marshal Foch to Ambassador Sharp.

Office of Marshal Foch,
14.4.19.

DEAR SIR,

I am detained by obligations which prevent me from going to the station to salute you on your departure with Mrs. Sharp.

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But I wish to tell you once again of the deep memory we retain of the loyal and cordial relations maintained between us, and consequently of the great services you have rendered to the common cause.

Please present to Mrs. Sharp, with the best remembrances of the Maréchale Foch, my most respectful homage and receive the assurance of my devoted sentiments.

F. FOCH.

It was a source of great gratification to me to know that the charge I was relinquishing under such conditions of international importance was to be taken over by Mr. Hugh C. Wallace. His own eminent personal qualities, and his many years of devotion to the cause of President Wilson, left no doubts in my mind, or for that matter in the mind of anyone who knew him, as to both his aptness for the post and the success with which he would discharge duties difficult in themselves, but rendered all the more delicate by the political developments even then evident on the international horizon.[1] But what gave me the highest sense of personal satisfaction in having Mr. Wallace as my successor was that I knew he was a man who would, at all times and in all circumstances, be loyal to his illustrious chief.

I did not, however, by any means consider that my own utility was ended, as concerned either the President or France. There remained notably all that I could say to my own country-people on behalf of the French, their aims, their ideals, their qualities and characteristics, all too little known

[1] Recalling a conversation with a neutral in the autumn of 1917, Count Czernin has written: "The victory of one group as in previous wars, he maintained, where the conqueror gleaned a rich harvest of gains and the vanquished had to bear all the losses, was out of the question in this present war. *Tout le monde perdra, et à la fin il n'y aura que des vaincus.* I often recalled that interview later. . . . The conquerors' finances are in a very precarious state, particularly in Italy and France . . . they live in the hope that the defeated Central Powers will have to pay, and they will thus be saved. It was set forth in the Peace terms, but *ultra posse nemo tenetur*, and the future will show to what extent the Central Powers can fulfil the conditions dictated to them." *In the World War*, Count Ottokar Czernin, London, 1919, Chapter VIII.

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even by many among us who felt genuine affection for them. But there remained most of all what should be done for President Wilson's great work, the League of Nations, which he had fostered and which he had introduced into the Treaty of Versailles.

It was in a spirit of undying loyalty to my old Chief, and of unbounded confidence in his ideal, that on January 10, 1921, I made a plea for the League of Nations Covenant during a conference with President-elect Harding. I must say that I left with a distinct impression that the next President would have none of the League, though I surmised that he might agree to the Treaty divorced from the League; but the League itself did not exist so far as the plans of the next Administration were concerned.

I spoke with frankness to my old neighbour, presenting the view that, while the nations of Europe wanted to please the United States, they would be much embarrassed by any demand for the death of the League. I urged that the provisions of the Treaty and the provisions of the Covenant were so intertwined that it would be almost impossible to disentangle the two. I therefore hoped that the coming Administration would find a way to preserve the good features of the Covenant, while rejecting the parts that were thought to infringe on American sovereignty. I added that France would prefer to see the League preserved, and would welcome American participation.

If I received little comfort from Senator Harding on these lines, there was a good deal of hope in the general principles for a world association that he had thought out, to bring the nations into much closer friendship, but without any ties that would commit them to such action as might embarrass their peoples. I found that the Senator looked confidently to the Hague Tribunal and to a World Court, and that partial disarmament was a feature of his plan. I was especially pleased to hear his views as to disarmament. Now is the time, if ever, to begin that reform, and it is up to the United States to show the world that she is sincere.

Senator Harding's general idea of an establishment of inter-

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national relationships, as outlined to me, while not agreeing with the League as I have favoured it, yet embraced some of the most useful and important features of the League—a permanent Court of International Arbitration and an Association of Nations, and a useful means of counsel.

I recognize in view of the issue as drawn in the last campaign, and of the result at the polls, that the League of Nations, so far as this country is concerned, is not to be. On the other hand, I am most gratified to have learned from my conversation with the President-elect that, so far as he is concerned, there is no danger of this country lapsing into a state of splendid isolation such as we might have feared if a conception of American aloofness from the affairs of Europe were dominating his mind. He entertains no such ideas. He is keenly alive to the fact that America cannot be aloof; that it must carry its part of the world burden, and that there exists a mutuality of interests between it and its Allies in the late struggle which we cannot fail to recognize.

No man wanted peace more than President Wilson. Long before the United States entered the war, he strove on its behalf, and never did he cease striving. His love of peace, the shrewdness with which he handled the delicate problems of internationalism at the Peace Conference, his wisdom and counsel, won for him the love and admiration of all Europe.[1]

But the French people, naturally, after the experience of the last half-century and the two fearful wars from which they have suffered, find their first and overwhelming concern in their necessity for securing guarantees against a repetition of these experiences. The security of France is at the heart of the European situation, if European peace is to be reasonably insured; and I hope strongly that our country will develop a programme along lines that will help to accomplish these results.

I would now speak as an American manufacturer who has given considerable thought to the question of our trade rela-

[1] For a French opinion of Woodrow Wilson, see *Le Président Wilson* (Paris, 1919), by Daniel Halévy, son of the immortal author of *L'Abbé Constantin*.

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tions before the war and since the war began and who, because of three years of service in Congress on the House Committee on Foreign Relations before going into the diplomatic corps, had occasion to consider particularly the matter of our trade abroad.

It is world commerce that little by little is going to be rehabilitated, not merely the trade of this or that country; and the United States, the country with the greatest purchasing power and the strongest industry, and the strongest financial and natural resources, is not going to be left out of the reckoning. It is against human nature to put or try to put burdens on the man who is not only your best customer, but who also has so much that you, in your turn, must buy from him. And human nature has not been destroyed by this war.

Furthermore, the group characteristics, the special manifestations of human nature in this country or that, have not been eradicated. The Germans of the future will be the same as the Germans of 1914, and so it will be with the French, the English and all the rest. They were all doing the best they knew how before the war in the way of trade or industry, and they will gradually resume those ways after the war. The last few years have taught them no new ways, so far as the peaceful pursuits of trade and commerce are concerned.[1] No people can shed their national characteristics any more than they can change the prevailing colour or texture of their skin.

I am enough of an optimist to believe that the bitterness itself still reigning between some nations will be temporary. Bitterness and hatred are not normal. To put the case on

[1] "On the whole, the nations are once more a stable society. We are out of the morass and on solid ground, though the going is still heavy. . . . The recovery of Italy has been due less to a creed or a man than to the fact that the Italian people have put their back to the wheel. France and Germany have been restored, not by men of destiny but by the silent labour of their artisans and peasants. Here in Britain, where the task has been harder, salvation must be won by the same means. It is a comforting reflection, for it is better to trust in the mass of mankind than in a leader or a theory." Colonel John Buchan, "1920 *to* 1930," *The Morning Post*, December 31, 1929.

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higher ground, they will not survive, cannot survive the comity that is essential to world trade.

Bitterness and hatred will melt away in the eagerness of the business revival that is coming to Europe, and in the sense of security that peace is going to bring to all of them.

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